

Conflict flares as Saddam hits at Kurds

US shoots down truce-breaking Iraqi warplane

By PETER STOTHARD IN WASHINGTON AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

THE American air force shot down an Iraqi warplane yesterday near President Saddam Hussein's home town of Tikrit. President Bush said that it had been flying in violation of the ceasefire and he threatened that any other aircraft breaching the truce would meet a similar fate.

In another incident, Iraqi snipers were reported to have shot at civilians and troops in occupied southern Iraq. An American soldier rescued an Iraqi teenager trapped in barbed wire as the gunmen fired.

The Iraqi SU-22 fighter bomber shot down yesterday was one of two that American observers believed to be part of Saddam's anti-insurgency force ranged against Kurds in the north of the country. The rebels claim to be in control of all of Iraqi Kurdistan apart from Mosul, Iraq's biggest northern city, and say that a state of emergency had been declared in Baghdad.

They also accuse Saddam of using helicopters to bomb oil wells and drop napalm and white phosphorus in the Kirkuk area. America has

suspected Saddam of using helicopters to crush the rebellion sweeping his country and at one stage claimed that their flights violated the temporary ceasefire agreement, whose terms have not been divulged.

The Pentagon has since been careful not to state that all helicopter flights break the ceasefire, but defence officials insist that the use of fixed-wing aircraft is outlawed. The White House said that the attack on the SU-22 should not be seen as a resumption of hostilities, although America has well-formed plans for resuming attacks on Iraq if they are judged necessary. Mr Bush told reporters covering President Wales's visit to Washington that he did not expect further incidents now that the so-called "fly and die" rule had been enforced. The second aircraft landed safely.

Washington is divided about the best way to manage this interim phase of Middle Eastern diplomacy and war. Some senior officials are calling for a rapid permanent ceasefire to be agreed at the United Nations to remove some of the uncertainty which they fear could lead to a resumption of the wider conflict.

Iraq yesterday annulled its annexation of Kuwait, but at the UN, diplomats said that the terms for a permanent ceasefire were still unlikely to be agreed this week. The British proposal that Saddam be forced to destroy all his stocks of chemical weapons has not been resolved, and nor has there been agreement on the mechanism for linking a resumption of Iraqi oil sales to the payment of reparations to Kuwait. The embargo, whose government resigned yesterday, is still without power and other essential services.

While the uncertainty over the ceasefire remains, the White House is juggling the need for a stable climate for James Baker's broader Middle East peace mission with the need to contain Saddam's repression of his people.

Iraqi opposition leaders trying to decide practical moves to support the uprising in Iraq and hasten Saddam's downfall were said to have found

common ground at a meeting in Beirut last week and are considering holding another in Riyadh. Imam Sayed Hussein al-Sadr, a Shia leader based in London, said that delegates had agreed the need for all Iraqi groups to be represented in a future government, but expressed disappointment that they had not agreed to form a provisional government-in-exile.

Refugees arriving in Iran and at an American army checkpoint at Safwan in occupied southern Iraq yesterday reported further atrocities by forces loyal to Saddam. They said that the Republican Guard was executing dozens of people in front of their families in the streets of Basra. Saddam's forces were also reported to be dragging thousands of civilians from their homes and moving them to makeshift camps. "They took children and tied them to tanks as human shields," Muwaffaq al-Rubeie, a Dawa party spokesman, said in London.

The outlawed communist party of Iraq, based in Damascus, also reported wide-scale hostage-taking, saying that many thousands of Kurds had been seized in the Kirkuk area and some had been killed. The communists said pro-government forces were trying to use the men as bargaining counters against the rebels.

Jalal Talabani, head of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, based in Damascus, said that government forces started bombing Kurdish-held oil wells in Kirkuk, which produced about a third of Iraq's oil before the war, yesterday morning. Many had been set ablaze. Mr Talabani said that the rebels held all of Kurdistan apart from Mosul, adding: "The liberation of Baghdad will take place very shortly."

The Shia Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq said from the Syrian capital that a state of emergency had been declared in Baghdad and that people had been banned from entering the city since last week.



American hero: the infantryman braving the snipers' bullets to save a young boy from being shot by fellow Iraqis

Soldier risks his life to save boy

By NICHOLAS WATT

AN AMERICAN soldier risked his life this week by running into enemy fire to rescue a teenage Iraqi boy who was being shot at by the boy's countrymen, it was reported yesterday.

The 13-year-old boy, clad in dark Arab robes, had become entangled in barbed wire as he ran across a barren strip of land in an attempt to escape two Iraqi snipers who had opened fire on civilians and US soldiers in the area of southern Iraq under allied military control. Sky television filmed a group of soldiers as they urged the boy to duck to avoid the shots. Suddenly one of the infantrymen dashed out to the boy, to cries of "hero" from his fellow troops.

The soldiers quickly took up position to cover their colleague. Before dragging the boy to safety the infantryman had to win his confidence by gesturing to him, as he crouched behind the barbed wire, not to be scared. When the teenager realised that the soldier was trying to help, he looked up and embraced him. The infantryman then grabbed the boy's hand and hauled him away from the barbed wire.

After reaching safety, the American sat down with the boy and told him to take deep breaths to calm down. He also gave him a swig of water from his hip flask. US tanks then moved in and the snipers fled the building that they had been using.

Captain John Andrews, of the 1st battalion of the US 41st Infantry, who was in charge of the troops, said: "I worry a lot about the Iraqi soldiers but not as near as much as I do about the civilians. Watching children and everything gets your heart a lot more than the soldiers. The soldiers know pretty much what it's all about. The civilians are the biggest casualty of the war."

Chancellor dashes hope of any early tax cuts

By ANATOLE KALETSKY, ECONOMICS EDITOR

THERE will be no room for any further tax cuts in the "near future", Norman Lamont said yesterday. In a subdued post-budget briefing, he underlined the government's determination to maintain a cautious economic strategy in the years ahead.

Although the Chancellor would not say how long tax cuts would be ruled out, he admitted that the Treasury's financial projections showed there would be virtually no scope for a "fiscal adjustment" within the next four years.

The Treasury figures suggest that the government will remain in deficit until 1994-95. The public sector borrowing requirement might be eliminated by then, but only if tax cuts are confined to 0.25 per cent of gross domestic product. The swing into deficit announced in Tuesday's Budget was due mainly to the effects of a much deeper recession than had been expected, and the large sums spent by the Treasury on mitigating the poll tax.

"The scope in the immediate future for tax cuts does not look bright," Mr Lamont said. "We will only reduce taxes when we think it is responsible and prudent to do so." He added, however, that the government remained committed

to the long-term aim of reducing standard rate income tax from 25 to 20 per cent.

He also said that there was no question of eliminating basic rate tax relief on mortgage interest payments. The Chancellor's decision to abolish higher rate tax relief on mortgages in the Budget was seen by some commentators as the first step towards the total elimination of mortgage relief. The move provoked protests yesterday from building societies and housebuilders.

Referring to the general economic outlook, Mr Lamont refused to make any firm predictions about interest rates. He said, however, that the "prudent and cautious" budget framework might give him more room for manoeuvre in the medium term.

He said he was satisfied that inflation was falling, but conceded that the £43 billion switch from poll tax to VAT and excise duties would make it harder to measure the underlying rate of inflation. He said he would look at numerous indicators when making policy judgments, including the Retail Prices Index, the "underlying" RPI excluding poll tax and mortgages, and the Producer Prices Index.

The Chancellor's comments

and an earlier remark by John Maples, the economic secretary to the Treasury, dampened interest rate hopes in the City. Mr Maples said in a radio interview that a cut in interest rates this week was "unlikely".

Despite this, many City analysts continued to expect an interest rate reduction on Friday, after the publication of the February inflation figures. Earlier predictions of a one-point fall in rates were reassessed, however, with most observers now predicting a half-point cut. Share prices fell by 17 points on the FTSE-100 index, while sterling gained some ground against both the dollar and the Deutschmark.

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VAT increase, page 16
Letters, page 17
Beat the Budget, page 20
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Thousands of shipyard jobs lost

The main engineering union yesterday demanded help for a shipbuilding town which will lose up to 5,500 jobs because of defence cuts. VSEL, maker of the Trident nuclear submarine, said it will have to cut its workforce in Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria, to about 8,000 by 1995, after studying the implications of the defence ministry's Options for Change which proposed far-reaching changes to the Royal Navy's building programme.

Frank Ward, of the AEU, said that Barrow was more dependent on just one company for its prosperity than any other town in the country. Page 9

Later poll results boost Gorbachev

From MARY DEBEVSKY IN MOSCOW

LATEST results from Sunday's Soviet referendum indicate that President Gorbachev's victory for the concept of a "renewed federation" was more convincing than seemed likely from early projections. They also show that the Russian leader, Boris Yeltsin, did not gain as large a majority for his attempt to introduce a directly elected presidency in the Russian Federation as initial results had suggested.

The new picture, which shows a similar 70 per cent majority for both propositions, emerges from the first comprehensive results from the Russian Federation, the biggest of the Soviet Union's 15 republics. These show that Mr Yeltsin's sweeping victories in urban centres like Moscow and his home town of

Sverdlovsk were offset by much smaller majorities in rural areas.

The chairman of the Russian Federation's referendum commission, Vasilii Kazakov, told reporters yesterday that with 90 per cent of the results in, the turnout across Russia had averaged 77 per cent of all registered voters. Some 70.8 per cent of these voted "yes" to Mr Gorbachev's proposal on a "renewed federation of equal sovereign republics", while 26.9 per cent voted "no". Those voting "yes" constituted 54.2 per cent of all registered voters. In the second question about creating a directly elected Russian presidency, voting was 70 per cent in favour and 27.9 per cent against.

Hard plea, page 15

Girl jockey hurt in fall



O'Gorman suffered head injuries to head

EMMA O'Gorman, the apprentice jockey, received serious head injuries in a fall at Southwell races yesterday. She was knocked unconscious after being thrown from the mare Honey Mill 25 yards from the finish of a six-furlong race.

The racecourse's senior medical officer, said that O'Gorman, aged 17, had "a bad head injury". She is the daughter of Bill O'Gorman, the Newmarket trainer.

Full report, page 40

A moaners' guide to Lamont's foggy budget

By ALAN HAMILTON



BUDGETS used to be such simple things to moan about. A penny on a pint, tuppence on fags, the sort of official pocket-picking the taxpayer on the Clapham omnibus, without a degree in advanced fiscal studies, could grasp and gripe over from the page of his evening paper. Norman Lamont's debut, on the other hand, has created a fog of confusion and bemusement.

Even changes in the price of life's essentials are unclear. The 56p we were led to believe was to be imposed on a bottle of whisky now appears to be nearer 77p, and the twopence to be added to a pint of beer looks suspiciously like five. The reason is that drinkers are punished by paying a tax on a tax; they will be obliged to pay increased VAT on the increased excise duty, a curiously impertinent impost.

Manufacturers of mobile phones were more hurt than confused that the Chancellor should penalise users of them with the aim of making roads safer and restaurants quieter.

But their dismay was as nothing to that which permeated the town halls of Britain, from Westminster to Shetland, at the Chancellor's sudden and enormous injection of pain-killing money to make the dying days of the poll tax more comfortable. Officials of Birmingham city council had to rush to the main post office yesterday to intercept almost 700,000 poll tax demands for the old figure of £406. Sir Richard Knowles, leader of the Labour-controlled council, observed sourly: "It is going to take another half of a rain forest to reprint all this rubbish."

Westminster council in London was wrestling with a different dilemma; its new poll tax has fallen from £176 to £36,

but officials calculate that it will cost £42 to collect. In Wandsworth, whose proposed poll tax of £136 has been wiped out, there were two suggestions: one that council officials should stand at street corners handing out £4 to passers-by, and another that its tax collectors should be seconded to neighbouring Lambeth, which has a severe problem of poll-tax arrears.

In Mr Lamont's home county of Shetland, the islanders were not as delighted as they might be at a poll tax reduced to 93p. Scots pay water rates along with the tax, and the true figure will be nearer £40. Unfortunately, at least 500 people on outlying islands are not connected to a council water supply, and the council is not sure whether it is worth sending those people a letter costing 20p to demand 93p in return.

Ninety-three pence is not even the price of a packet of fags these days.

Hi-tech hits the shirkers where it hurts

Back trouble costs industry £4.5 billion a year. Nick Nuttall looks at a machine that may ease the pain

A machine that can indicate whether back problems are genuine or not may be cited for the first time in evidence in the High Court. The "spinal lie detector", which is said to have saved American companies thousands of dollars by weeding out malingerers, is on trial in Britain.

The device, the Isostation B200, has been at the centre of several personal injury cases in America, where it has influenced awards. A driver in Florida claiming £25,000 in damages after a car accident had his award quadrupled after being screened by the machine. A worker seeking £300,000 from the Burlington Railroad company was awarded only £60,000 after the machine suggested that the back problems were exaggerated.

Three British cases, the first of which is expected in June, may decide if similar evidence is admissible here, said Hugo Kitchen, a consultant orthopaedic physician. With his brother James he runs the Flight-back clinic in Stratford-upon-Avon, where the machine has been on trial.

Dr Kitchen said the device was also playing a key role in helping companies reduce their overheads by screening workers for back problems before employment, designing exercise programmes which get them back to work faster and by pinpointing malingerers. "In the first year that Coca-Cola installed one of these machines they reduced absenteeism by half and cut costs related to the effect of back pain by 87 per cent. This saved them £500,000 in the first year," said Dr Kitchen.

Other companies report similar advantages.

At the heart of the device is a frame into which a patient is strapped such that the only movement possible is from muscles in the lower back. The frame has transducers and highly sensitive strain gauges

Continued on page 26, col 3

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Researchers trace adult diseases to the womb

By THOMSON PRENTICE, MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

EVIDENCE is emerging that many adult disorders, including heart disease, schizophrenia and diabetes, originate in the unborn child, leading researchers said yesterday. The findings have potentially huge implications for disease prevention and maternal and infant nutrition, according to the scientists. The researchers believe that little-understood events affecting the fetus at crucial stages of its development influence the risks of serious illnesses in adulthood. Their evidence is published today in a book containing the proceedings of a symposium held by the Ciba Foundation in London. Researchers taking part discussed their results at a news conference yesterday.

David Barker, professor of environmental epidemiology at Southampton University, said: "There are critical windows of time in the womb during which incidents occur in the fetus that have immense long-term consequences for health."

Some forms of heart disease, stroke, bronchitis and diabetes, which may not strike until an individual is middle-aged, had their beginnings before birth, he said.

Professor Barker and colleagues at a Medical Research Council unit at Southampton carried out studies showing that babies born about 50 years ago with impaired growth went on to become adults who today have high blood pressure, a risk factor for heart conditions and strokes. Studies implied that the babies failed to reach their potential size because they did not receive sufficient nutrients through the placenta.

"If a baby misses essential nutrients during its growth in the womb, it simply cannot recover - the damage is done," Professor Barker said.

Minor complications in pregnancy appear to make some babies more likely to grow up with a latent risk of schizophrenia, Robin Murray, professor of psychological medicine at the Institute of Psychiatry, London, said. "Some calamity occurs, perhaps due to a viral infection, the effects of drugs, or the mother's nutrition, that impairs the normal development of the baby's brain," he said.

Research showed that people born during British winters were more likely to develop schizophrenia. This raised the possibility that viral infections more common in winter were acquired by their mothers and affected their pregnancies.

Such abnormalities lay dormant until the child reached adulthood, when its intellectual development was complete, Professor Murray said. Imaging techniques showed how the brains of schizophrenia sufferers had failed to grow fully before birth.

The Childhood Environment and Adult Disease (published by John Wiley & Sons, Chichester, West Sussex, £39.50).

Health, page 21

Insurance fears 'put people off Aids test'

By OUR MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

MOST Aids specialists believe that people are deterred from taking an HIV test because it will harm their chances of getting life insurance, according to a survey submitted to the health department.

Questions on insurance proposals about an individual's lifestyle and whether he or she has had counselling about the disease should be abolished, the Terrence Higgins Trust, a leading Aids charity, said yesterday.

Peter Roth, chairman of the trust's insurance working party, said that a leaked copy of the survey showed that Aids specialists felt that the questions encouraged false answers. In a speech to the Life Underwriters' Club in London, he said the only Aids-related question on the forms should be whether the individual had had a positive test for HIV infection or Aids.

"The objective of life insurers seeking to identify those who are of reduced life expectancy through the risk of Aids is reasonable. The concern is over the means used to achieve that end," he said. Evidence of behaviour changes among homosexuals and of increasing spread of HIV infection among heterosexuals meant that questions about sexual orientation were of little relevance.

The survey, sponsored by the health department and the Association of British Insurers, is expected to be published soon.



Face to face: Jenny Basketfield, aged 12, from Moorhall Combined school, Sutton Coldfield, with the "mini-m-saurus" that earned her school second place in BBC Television's "make a plasticine dinosaur" competition. The winner was Euxton Primrose Hill school, Chorley, Lancashire

Study aims to clarify nature of Holy Spirit

By RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

THE nature of the Holy Spirit, an issue that continues to divide Catholics and Protestants, has been brought to the forefront of Christian debate in a Church of England report published today.

The report says that most believers today have heard that there is such a thing as the Holy Spirit but few pay it any attention in their prayers or thinking. The concept is often intangible. The authors, the general synod's doctrine commission, argue for the traditional view of the Holy Spirit as a separate person within the Trinity.

However, the document came under attack by the Church Society, an evangelical body in the church. "It is nothing short of astonishing that in such a work on the Holy Spirit the major Biblical doctrine of the New Birth, that only through His intervention man is born again, hardly gets a mention," the society said.

We Believe in the Holy Spirit (Church House Publishing, 31 Great Smith Street, London SW1 £5.95 plus 80pp).

Move to improve school reports

By DAVID TYTLER, EDUCATION EDITOR

A STANDARD school report form designed to give parents clear information on their children's progress was issued by the government yesterday.

The move followed complaints that some parents were being given incomprehensible reports. Schools are now required to provide annual written reports covering national curriculum subjects, public examination results, and other subjects and activities. The new form, for children aged five to 14, is not compulsory but the government hopes that it will be widely used. It will be introduced on a pilot basis this summer.

Tim Eggar, the education minister, said: "Up to now, some parents have received excellent reports, some have had incomprehensible ones, and some have had none at all. That is not good enough. All parents, wherever their child is at school, have the right to expect the same basic information."

National testing in the curriculum begins for seven-year-olds this spring. Mr Eggar said that the form would help to ensure clear reporting and a consistency of style, which would benefit parents whose children changed school.



Eggar wants clear and consistent reporting

Under "Overview of performance" and "Recommendations for action by parents" as well as those relating to school subjects. For a seven-year-old in a state primary school this summer, when pupils will be tested at three levels for English, mathematics and science, there will be comments on the child's performance in those areas and in technology, history, geography, music, art, physical education and religious education.

Under "Overview of performance", for example, the report might say: John is a happy child and he has had a successful year. His work is moving forward well, with just a few gaps still to be filled. Most of his attainments are at level 2 with very few at level 1 and several at level 3. This is a better than average achievement... His reading is improving steadily and he has worked really hard at mathematics. John is co-operative in class and works well with others although he can be a little forgetful. Occasionally he rushes into things too quickly.

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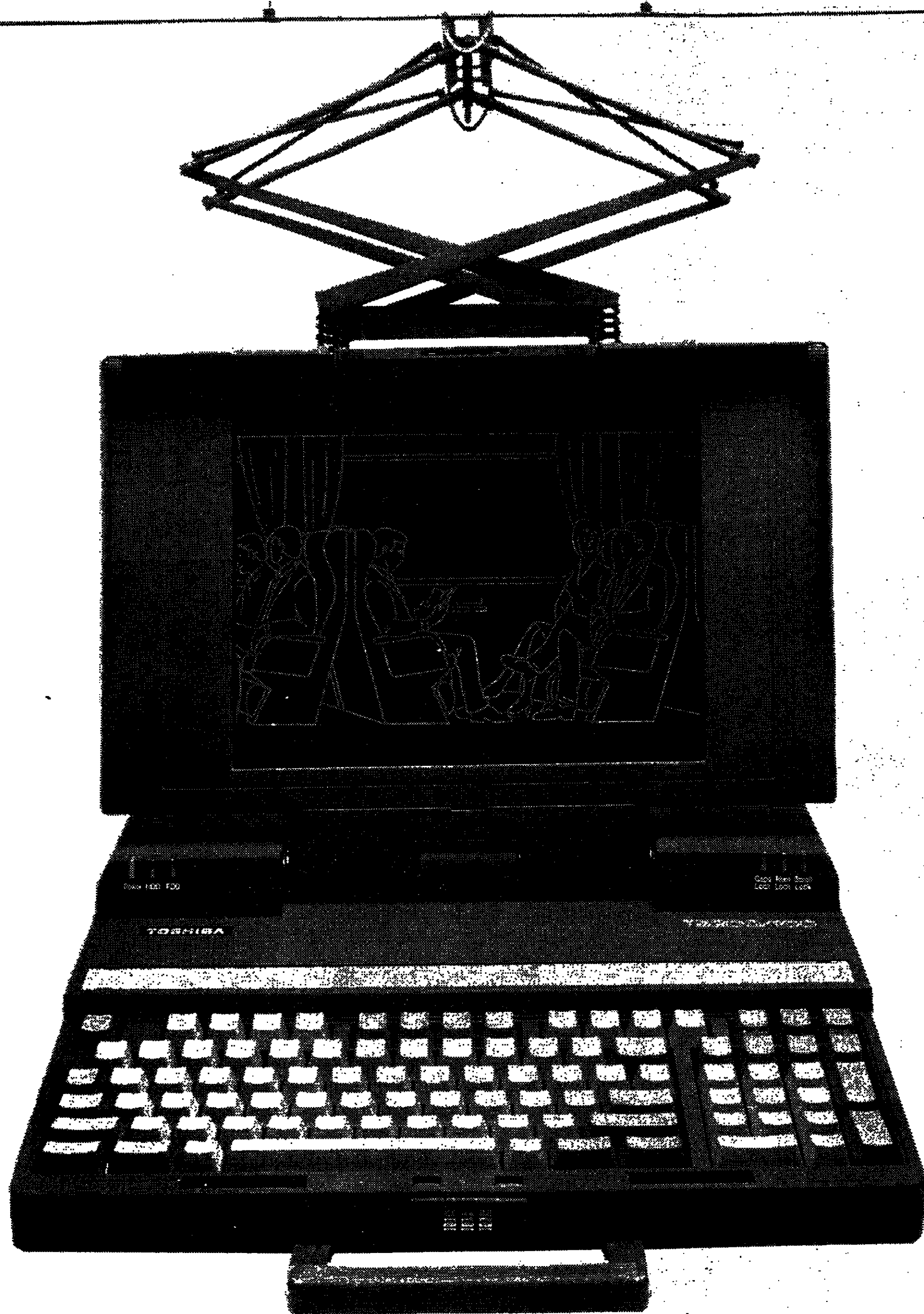
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Douglas Broom looks back to the petty bureaucracy of previous local council structures

Prospect of change revives memories of town hall turmoil

MICHAEL Heseltine, the environment secretary, will ask the cabinet today to approve the biggest restructuring of local government in England and Wales for almost 20 years.

If ministers endorse his plan for reform, communities will be given the first opportunity this century to choose their own style of local council through the ballot box.

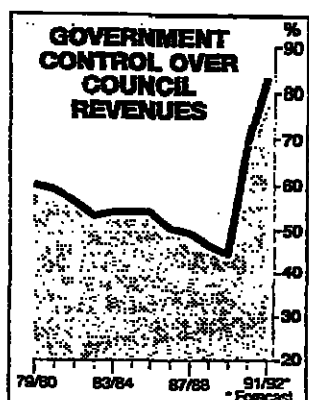
Mr Heseltine believes that the present system, introduced in 1974, is too unwieldy and he wants to replace it with a single tier of local authorities performing all the functions carried out by the present two tiers.

In town and county halls across the country the prospect of change has sent a predictable shudder through those who remember the turmoil of the last reorganisation.

Their fears centre on the disruption and cost of any changes, but they also pray that any new structure will avoid plunging local government back into the confusing mess that it had become by the late Sixties.

While there are cogent arguments for breaking up the Napoleonic uniformity of the present system, a brief examination of what went before is enough to chill the soul of any democrat.

Just as the inequities of the rates have been forgotten in the rush to replace the poll tax, so the pettifogging bureaucracy of the old system appears to have been over-



looked by those who are in favour of more smaller councils.

Lord Redcliffe-Maud, whose commission of enquiry prompted the 1974 reforms, described the system that existed before 1974 as a "hotch-potch", a term many regarded as too kind. Then, as now, turnouts at local elections were low and apathy was rife. The structure had remained little changed, apart from the grant of charters to boroughs, since the foundations of local government in England and Wales were laid by the creation of counties in 1888 and districts in 1894.

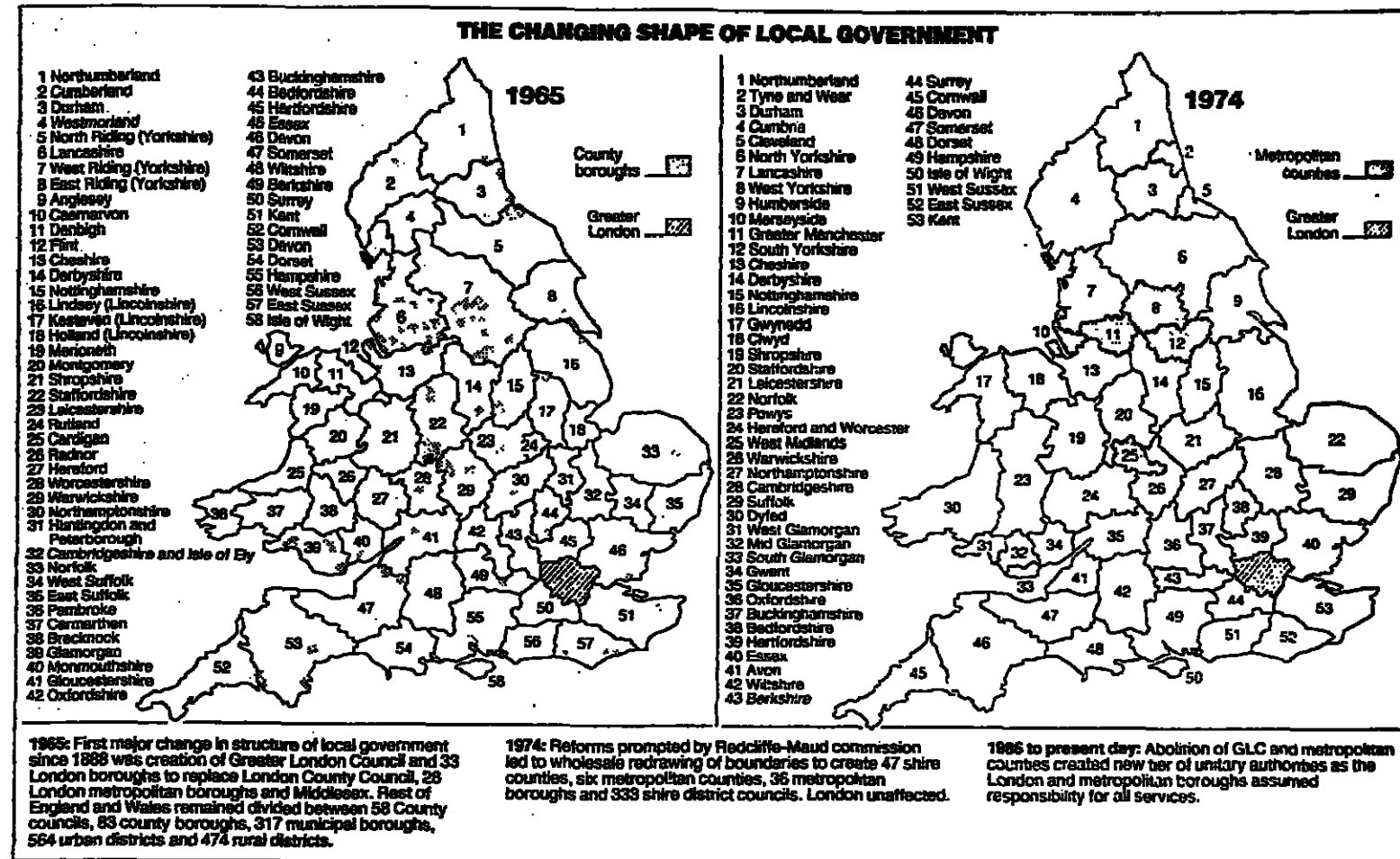
In England alone there were 48 county councils and 79 county boroughs, exercising the same powers as the counties in cities from Birmingham and Bristol to Hull and Nor-

wich. Until 1965 the London conurbation was split between Middlesex and the London county council, below which were 28 metropolitan boroughs and the City of London. Outside the capital there were 285 municipal boroughs, 491 urban districts and 415 rural districts, while Wales had a further 12 counties, four county boroughs, 32 municipal boroughs, and 73 urban and 59 rural districts.

The first step towards reform was made in 1965 when changes to the government of London led to the creation of the Greater London Council and 32 boroughs. The GLC took over the areas of the old county council and Middlesex and subbed chunks out of Hertfordshire, Kent and Essex. The City alone survived intact.

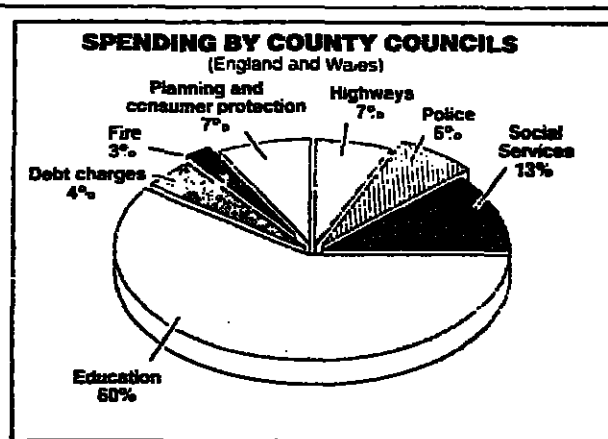
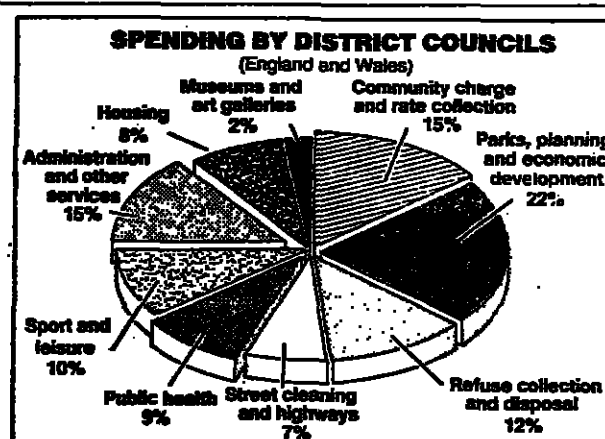
The Redcliffe-Maud enquiry, set up in 1966 to review the structure of local government in England, proposed the creation of 58 unitary authorities, three metropolitan districts, its advice was ultimately rejected although the structure that emerged in the 1972 Local Government Act kept the idea of metropolitan counties and districts.

Unlike Redcliffe-Maud's vision of powerful metropolitan authorities, the new metropolitan counties had comparatively few functions. Education and social services, the



big spenders, were given to the districts. Many, particularly in the Conservative party, came to believe that the metropolitan counties had too little work to do and they were eventually abolished along with the Greater London Council in 1986.

The last alteration to the local government map was made in April of last year when the Inner London Education Authority, which became a directly-elected body on the demise of the GLC, followed its predecessor into oblivion.



LAMBETH WANDSWORTH £140 cut warmly welcomed

By RAY CLANCY

MILLIONS of people were yesterday celebrating the promised £140 cut in the community charge. At Brixton market, south London, Bert White had a bigger grin than usual on his face as he called: "Six lovely oranges for a pound, come along my dears, six for a pound."

Mr White, who lives in Lambeth, still faces paying the highest poll tax in the country at £450 but even that was not going to prevent him feeling happy about the reduction and offering customers six oranges for £1 instead of five. "There are a lot more happy faces around here, everyone is talking about it, some can't believe it," he said.

A few yards away Sue Bright was living up to her name. "It is the best news our family could have. My twin sons had their 18th birthday last week and we were facing a bill for the whole family of £2,360, now it will be only £1,800. It is still a lot of money and we are eagerly waiting to see what is going to replace this unfair tax," she said.

Across the borough boundary in Wandsworth residents were stunned. Many could not believe they would not be paying the £136 charge. "I can't believe it. I suppose we should be asking for our £4 back," Graham Fish, a bus driver, said.

Kay Jones, a newly qualified nurse earning just over £9,000, said: "I have been against this tax from the beginning. At least the government seems to be doing something about it. It will make a big difference to me and should give me more money in my pocket." Her friend Sarah Lowden, also a nurse, was not so sure. "The rise in VAT might make me worse off," she said.



Some of Birmingham's poll tax forms which will have to be scrapped

COUNTING THE COST

Town halls face extra outlay

By BILL FROST

LOCAL authorities across the country were yesterday counting the cost of the Chancellor's decision to reduce the burden of poll tax, just as they were sending out demands for the coming financial year. In Birmingham, officials rushed to the central post office to halt distribution of almost 70,000 poll tax demands for £406.

Sir Richard Knowles, leader of the Labour-run city council, said: "It is going to take another half of a rain forest to re-print all this rubbish we have to send out on behalf of Her Majesty's Government."

The Tory-controlled London Boroughs Association also expressed a measure of dismay at Mr Lamont's move. A spokesman said: "There is going to be quite a lot of work involved, at considerable cost. It has taken everyone by surprise." The association

estimated that some member authorities would face extra costs of £500,000 to re-print community charge bills, and said that some had already sent out demands.

The association feared that Mr Lamont's decision to delay demands while new bills are printed might cause cash flow problems for councils.

Low-spending authorities yesterday faced another dilemma: the cost of collection outweighing the revenue. Westminster city council faced paying £42 to collect its new £36 poll tax. It had set its community charge at £176, but, like other councils' bills, the figure is to be cut by £140.

Dame Shirley Porter, leader of Westminster council, is to meet Michael Heseltine, the environment secretary, today to discuss the financial conundrum that the council faces.

Others had more immediate problems. Sandwell council, in the West Midlands, predicted chaos. John Edwards, chairman of the finance committee, said that it had already started sending bills to 110,000 homes.

Mr Lamont promised that the government would pay the estimated £60 million cost of re-billing charge payers. Such assurances failed to mollify all councils yesterday. Derek Antrobus, finance chairman of Salford council, Greater Manchester, said: "Another worry is the interest we may have to borrow until the new bills can be processed."

One London borough, however, faced a very different dilemma. Wandsworth council, the Tory local government flagship, had set Britain's lowest bill at £136. That will now be wiped out, with £4 to spare.

EUROPE

British stand apart on local funding

By ALICE THOMPSON

WITH the introduction of a flat-rate local community charge Britain became unique in Europe for its funding of local government. While America and Canada rely to a great extent on sales taxes, in Europe income taxes and property taxes have always been the most common way for local authorities to collect revenue.

Britain has always stood apart in the way that local government is financed. While property taxes are common in the rest of Europe, Britain is the only country ever to have relied exclusively on a property tax. Other countries

normally opt for more than one local tax and there is a much higher dependence on national and local income taxes. In Sweden and Norway virtually all of local government is financed from local income tax which can be as high as 30 per cent compared to a 20 per cent national tax. In Sweden the local councils are responsible for medical care.

In France inhabitants are expected to pay the *taxe d'habitation*, which amounts to a complex rating system. The amount levied on each dwelling takes into account local amenities, its size and even such things as parking facilities,

balconies and bathrooms. These taxes account for about one-third of local government income.

In Germany local authorities receive a 15 per cent share of national taxes and there are a myriad of local taxes that make up the difference. They can also receive regular income from such sources as dog licences, beer and entertaining.

The Spanish have also opted for a barrage of different taxes. All local governments rely to a greater or lesser extent on central government funding.

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SHETLAND

Islanders steel themselves to pay 93p

By KERRY GILL

FAIR Isle, the tiny island between Orkney and Shetland, has no refuse disposal, no mains sewerage and no street lights. Once a week in winter a boat crosses from Shetland, bringing petrol, food and cattle fodder.

Yet since the introduction of the community charge about 30 people on the island have been happy to pay the minimal sum, less than £130 this year, towards council services such as education and road mending. Elizabeth Eastham, one of the residents, said it was a small cost for the magnificent sea bird colonies and thundering waves.

The announcement that poll tax would be cut by £140, might have been welcomed in the islands. Surely a 93p poll tax bill a year was not too much to

ask. In many cases it was.

In practice most bills will fall from £185 to £45, or under £1 a week, as most Scots pay a water charge on top of their poll tax, £44.07 in the case of Shetland. Orkney islanders will be almost as well off, their annual bills, including water will be £108. The change has thrown the Shetland islands council into a quandary. There are 16,500 people liable to pay the tax and water charges, but another 500 on less accessible islands are not connected to a council water supply.

Yesterday James Cornick, the council's finance director, was pondering the sense of having to send them each a letter costing 20p to demand 93p. "About 500 people will get an annual bill for 93p because we are obliged to collect it. You could say we are turning

this over in our minds," he said.

One staff member said: "At this rate we will be able to collect more in fines for non-registration than in poll tax."

Mrs Eastham, who runs the Fair Isle bird observatory with her husband Paul Harvey, would have faced a family tax bill of £370 for 1991-2. Instead it will be £90. "I can't believe it. It seems quite crazy to me. I have always been opposed to the poll tax but if things like education funding are taken away from the council it would be terrible. That would be detrimental to Shetland," she said.

Mrs Eastham said a cut in the poll tax would be wiped out by higher costs due to the increase in VAT and transport charges. "On Fair Isle we must pay more for food than anywhere else in the country and it will only get worse."

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WILDING

Thousands of shipyard jobs lost after defence cuts

By TIM JONES, EMPLOYMENT CORRESPONDENT

THOUSANDS of jobs are to be shed by the shipyard builder VSEL, maker of the Trident nuclear submarine, at its yard at Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria, due to a slump in the defence industry.

Pay offer raises hope of end to rig strife

By KERRY GILL

NORTH Sea offshore contract workers are to be offered a new pay deal that should prevent further industrial action on oil and gas installations, the Offshore Contractors' Council said yesterday.

David Odling, the chairman, said that it was a fair offer for the 8,000 workers and included an 8.5 per cent rise on basic pay and higher night payments. A skilled worker would earn more than £25,000 a year for 26 working weeks.

However, the men said they still wanted full union recognition and reinstatement of those dismissed during industrial unrest last year.

Mr Odling said it was hoped that the mass wildcat stoppages of the summer would not be repeated following the offer which, it was hoped, could be implemented at the beginning of next month.

12,500 to between 7,000 and 9,000 by 1995. The yard employed 14,000 two years ago.

The company, whose order book stands at more than £3.5 million, half of which is for uncompleted work, decided on the cut in its workforce after studying the implications of the defence ministry's *Options for Change* last July which proposed far-reaching changes to the building programme of Royal Navy vessels. The number of nuclear-powered submarines is to be reduced from 18 to 12, with no further orders planned for diesel-electric submarines. There will also be delays to the next generation of nuclear-powered submarines and to the frigate programme.

The company said that in spite of these cutbacks, the defence procurement programme would remain large. It intends to concentrate on building surface ships and refitting submarines. It also believes that following success with its AS90 new-generation self-propelled howitzer, there are significant opportunities for that part of its business, particularly in exports. The British army has ordered 179 AS90s, which cost £2 million each. The company said that the Gulf war had identified the need for such highly mobile armaments.

The VSEL board has also decided to diversify from defence-related projects into industrial equipment for offshore projects and the manufacture of power generation plants.

In the Commons, the government faced cross-party calls to rescue shipbuilding. Edward Leigh, the junior industry minister, who plans to visit Barrow next week, said: "This, of course, is a result of the company's need to restructure and improve its competitiveness in the face of changing defence requirements."



The show goes on: Terry Hands, director of the Royal Shakespeare Company, conducts a rehearsal of *Love's Labour's Lost* as the company returns to the Barbican after four months' absence. The play opens in preview tonight marking the end of the first dark season since the Barbican's two theatres opened nine years ago (Simon Tait writes). It was

Terry Hands who, as chief executive, announced the decision last year not to appear in an attempt to save £2.4 million and avoid a £4 million deficit. Now, he says, he is relieved to be back. "I've directed more plays here than anyone else and although our base is Stratford, coming here is really like coming home for me." The rift with management, upset at

the departure, has been healed and the financial problems are almost solved, he says. At the beginning of this month Mr Hands passed his formal duties to Adrian Noble. Now officially "retiring artistic director", Terry Hands is bringing his last Stratford season to the Barbican. In the company's absence the technical staff remained to do jobs for which

there had been no time: rest rooms have been resited and the backstage area has been redecorated. Mr Hands says: "This is a wonderful theatre, I have always loved this place. The acoustics are great, the sightlines are good, there are no hierarchical boxes which people use to be seen in rather than see plays from."

Legal camps reach accord (with brackets)

By FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

AMID a blaze of self-congratulation, the Bar Council and the Law Society unveiled a common advocacy code yesterday to govern the conduct of advocates in the new world order expected under the government's law reforms.

Perhaps this was the end of the squabbles between the two bodies that have become known as "Bar Wars". No amount of public bonhomie could, however, disguise the most interesting aspect of the

"common" code: those "small but significant number of areas of disagreement".

On closer reading it is clear that on all the most contentious issues the two legal camps are as divided as ever. The code is littered with brackets, sometimes covering

Council". There are a host of paragraphs on which the two bodies have, for the time being, agreed to differ. Sticking points range from the cab-rank rule (the requirement to take any case that comes along) to the right of advocates to speak about cases in which they are involved. The Bar wants a ban on "comment", the Law Society on the giving of "personal views or opinions".

Other obstacles are the functions of advocates as opposed to litigators; whether advocates may also be involved in the preparation of a case, as solicitors are in magistrates' courts cases; and the position of advocates who are employed, such as those in the Crown Prosecution Service.

Both groups were at pains to emphasise that agreement was the message of the day. David Latham, QC, chairman of the Bar's professional standards committee, said that each branch was united on the fundamental principles and that the short time in which agreement had been reached showed how much common ground there was.

Stephen Hammett, chairman of the Law Society's standards and guidance committee, pointed out that the great majority of the code had been agreed after constructive and friendly discussions. He insisted that such disagreements as there were only went to show the different ways in which legal services were provided.

One year drink-drive ban for footballer

The England World Cup player Paul Parker was banned from driving for 12 months yesterday after admitting a drink-driving offence.

The Queen's Park Rangers defender, aged 26, admitted driving with excess alcohol and was fined £200, with £30 costs, by Chelmsford magistrates. The court was told that Parker was stopped on the A12 on New Year's day morning after he was spotted travelling at over 90mph.

A blood test gave a reading of 82 milligrams of alcohol — two milligrams over the legal limit. Godfrey Carey, counsel for Parker, of Billerica, said he had been drinking at a party the night before.

Blast to blame

Lord Kaberry of Adel never fully recovered from injuries sustained in an IRA bomb blast at the Carlton Club, his son Christopher told an inquest. The coroner, Philip Gill, adjourned the Leeds hearing for further details of how the blast might have aggravated his poor health.

Bankruptcy ends

A bankruptcy order against Nigel Watts, one of the defendants ordered to pay £1.5 million damages to Lord Aldington at the end of the "war crimes" libel trial in 1989, was cancelled by agreement in the High Court.

Call to account

A bomb hoaxer who was asked to hold the line by the operator was found holding the receiver 20 minutes later by police. Sentencing of Peter Devaney, an Irish labourer, of Waford, was adjourned for reports at Luton crown court.

Instant fines

Parliament is to be asked by London Transport to approve the introduction of £10 on-the-spot fines for fare dodgers on the Underground.

Sheep at 16p

The Country Landowners' Association, concerned at the economic plight of hill farmers, said yesterday that a farmer had received only 16p each for 40 ewes at auction.

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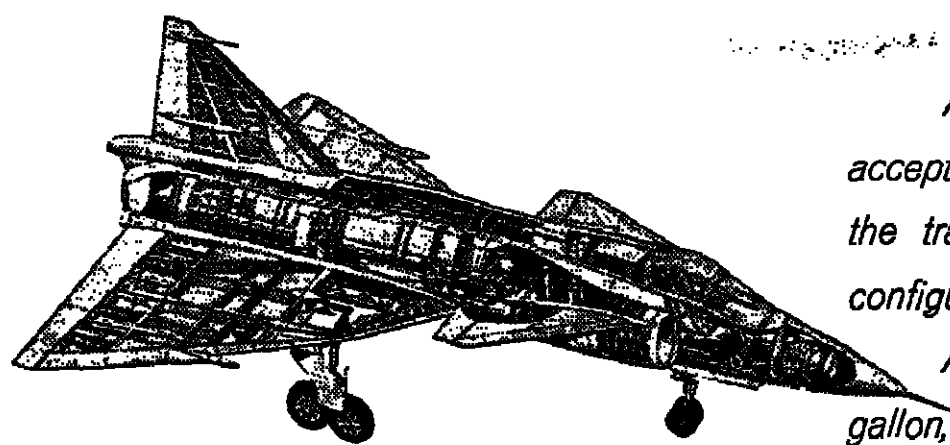
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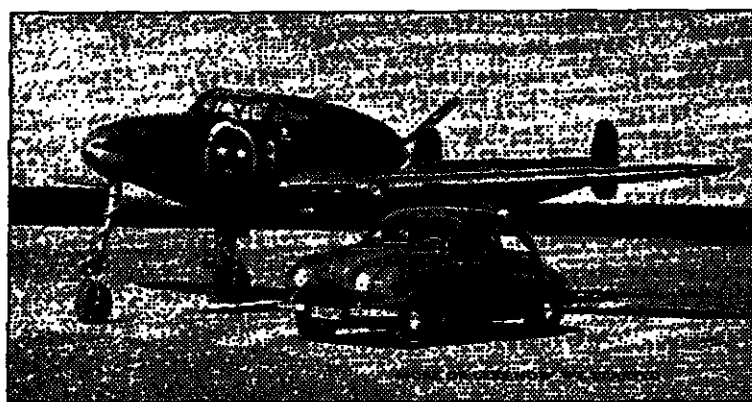
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Today, ample proof of Saab's 'less is more' philosophy can be experienced in Saab's all new 2.3 Turbo power plant.

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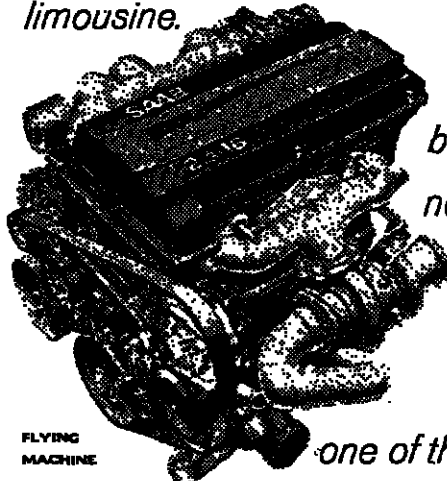
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However, most Saab owners like to pilot this craft themselves.

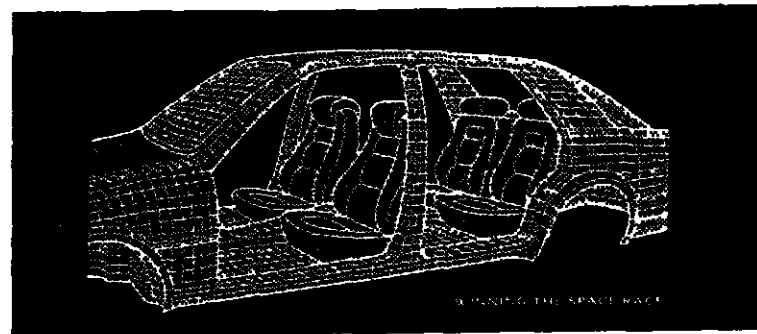
Crisp, sportslike handling, unrivalled acceleration and unimpeachable roadholding make the CD one of the most responsive cars of its kind.

Whilst a list of active and passive safety features, many of them unique to Saab, make it one of the most responsible of its kind.

As well as bags of features the CD comes with bags of space. (Its stable-mate the multi-role 9000, boasts an unmatched cargo carrying capacity of some 56.5 cubic feet.)

Sweden's preoccupation with car safety is now legendary and the latest models from Saab are no exception.

Once again, flying in the face of convention, aircraft-inspired construction make this 'Tardis-like' flying machine much bigger on the inside than anything else in its class.



(Lateral thinking and Saab's advanced Cray aeronautical computer placed the engine laterally across the chassis, allowing the forward bulkhead to be pushed forward, increasing both legroom, headroom and interior space.)

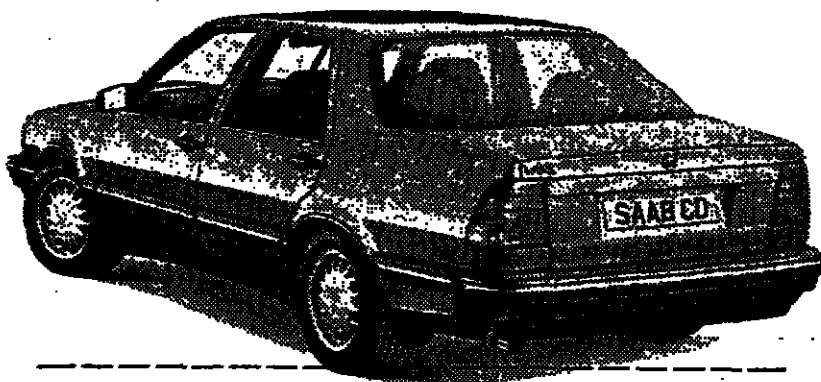
Internally, it is almost of limousine proportions, the corollary of a space-efficient front-drive powertrain and a longish wheel-base.

Bulky and awkward payloads pose no problems either, because the CD has a cavernous boot.

In conclusion, it would appear that Saab's aircraft-inspired design philosophy truly does give you more for less.

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KUWAIT

Government quits amid anger over food queues

FROM JAMIE DETTMER IN KUWAIT CITY

KUWAIT'S government resigned yesterday afternoon amid widespread public anger over its handling of the emergency programme to restore basic services in the emirate.

The government's resignation was widely welcomed in the capital, but opposition politicians dismissed it as a cosmetic exercise. "There will be no major change at all," Abdul Hussein al-Farham, a prominent figure in the Democratic Forum, said. "We want qualified people in the cabinet capable of dealing with this crisis. All it will be is changing ministers around."

Western diplomats were more confident that the move would mark a significant change in direction. "It is likely that there will be new people in the government," Michael Weston, the British ambassador, said. "A lot remains to be seen, but there has been pressure for the introduction of people who stayed in

Kuwait during the Iraqi occupation."

A ministerial source suggested that the purpose of the resignation was to oust the defence, foreign and interior ministers, who have been blamed by Kuwaitis for mishandling President Saddam Hussein before the Iraqi invasion.

Sheikh Saad al-Sabah, the crown prince, denied that the cabinet's resignation had anything to do with public criticism of its performance since the emirate was liberated. "It is normal for the government to resign," he said. "I decided that the time had come."

The resignation comes amid unprecedented criticism of Kuwait's ruling al-Sabah family. The crown prince and senior family members in the cabinet have been accused of incompetence. There have been protests outside the emir's residence, and the food queues outside distribution



Pungent problem: pedestrians picking their way past rubbish piled high in the streets of Kuwait City this week. Most public services, including refuse collection, have been at a virtual standstill since the allied forces liberated the occupied emirate three weeks ago

points in Kuwait City have become increasingly angry.

There has been mounting international concern at the government's failure to prevent Kuwaiti soldiers and resistance groups from seizing hundreds of Palestinians who supposedly collaborated with Iraqis. Amnesty International

said yesterday that there had been serious human rights abuses in Kuwait since its liberation. Western diplomats are believed to have told the emir that they are concerned that law and order might break down in the poorer Palestinian areas of the city.

In an attempt to portray the

resignation as favourably as possible, both the crown prince and Western diplomats emphasised that the idea of forming a new government had been discussed just before the emirate was liberated.

"We expected that there would be a government change when the government got back to Kuwait," Edward Goehm, the American ambassador, said.

Some cabinet ministers admitted, however, that the government's failure to restore most electricity, water and food supplies lay behind the decision. "You can't just brush aside criticism," Sul-

man Mattawa, the minister for planning, said.

© WASHINGTON: The United States took no part in the resignation of the government, but believes the move could help the country recover from the Gulf war devastation, the White House said yesterday. (Reuter)

CIVIL WAR

Saddam forces seize Kurds

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN DAMASCUS

PRO-GOVERNMENT forces fighting a desperate rearguard action to regain control of the vital Iraqi oil city of Kirkuk were accused yesterday of seizing thousands of Kurdish men in an apparent attempt to use their lives as bargaining counters against anti-Saddam fighters.

News of the seizures was received shortly before noon by members of the outlawed Communist Party of Iraq whose guerrillas, known as "partisans", were fighting alongside Kurdish militiamen to confirm control of the city whose capture many see as a prelude to an all-out attack on Baghdad.

"We have just received information from our men on the ground. They say that the authorities seized thousands of Kurdish men, many thousands more than the 5,000 previously reported, and that some of them have already been killed," Labid Abawi, a member of the party's central committee, said.

The communists receive details of the fighting in Kirkuk and elsewhere twice and sometimes three times a day in their cramped offices near the centre of Damascus, the Syrian capital. The information is believed to be transmitted by radio and later issued as Arabic-language communiques. They provide a graphic account of a struggle which most Iraqis now temporarily living in Syria refer to as "the intifada", the Arab world's word for uprising.

For them the original intifada by Palestinians against their Israeli occupiers has been forgotten. The communiques are written as they are received, often in stilted language that leaves much to be explained. But the Iraqi communists bristle with anger if it is suggested that they are making exaggerated claims or merely transmitting propaganda.

Yesterday's reports on the battle of Kirkuk began arriving at breakfast time. They spoke of the Iraq Kurdistan front, of which the communists are a part, having control of key areas including the so-called oil company district, the headquarters of an industry producing one quarter of all Iraq's oil. Pro-Saddam forces still holding parts of the airport and a military camp were said to be using "lethal gases now and then" and to be relying on planes which are "roaming in the sky".

"My feeling is that the Saddam forces have been using a limited amount of poison gas in order to test world reaction," Mr Abawi said. "If they find the outcry against them is not so great, they will use more. We know they are desperate to win back Kirkuk because of the oil that is there."

Mr Abawi spoke frequently about what he believes will be the inevitable "battle for Baghdad". He expected Saddam to go down fighting or to be assassinated from within rather than try to escape.

© NICOSIA: Iraqi forces yesterday bombed oil wells held by Kurdish insurgents around the town of Kirkuk, setting many ablaze, rebel forces said. Kurdish resistance groups claimed they had now captured the whole of Kurdistan. (Reuter)

Medical briefing, page 21

UNITED NATIONS

Big Five drafting durable ceasefire

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

THE five powers at the United Nations began negotiations yesterday on a draft resolution which will establish a permanent ceasefire in the Gulf and set conditions for the lifting of sanctions.

The resolution will pave the way for the withdrawal of allied forces from southern Iraq. Diplomats said they hoped the full security council would vote it through by Easter.

The Soviet Union is pressing for the resolution flatter to declare a definitive end to the war, and the other permanent members of the security council appear likely to agree so that allied troops can return home quickly.

In an effort to speed up Iraq's compliance, the five powers - Britain, China, France, the Soviet Union and the United States - held a closed-door meeting on Tuesday night to discuss demanding Iraq fulfil the remaining conditions set by the last resolution, number 686, for a formal ceasefire. They want Iraq to speed up the repatriation of Kuwaiti detainees and plundered Kuwaiti property and to have the National Assembly endorse the Revolutionary Command Council's repeal of the annexation of Kuwait.

The new resolution will lay down a further set of conditions that Iraq must fulfil before the trade embargo is lifted. Foremost is Britain's demand that Iraq agree to the supervised destruction of its ballistic missiles and chemical and biological weapons. A further condition is expected to be that Iraq accept a method of paying war compensation to Kuwait.

© NICOSIA: Iraqi forces yesterday bombed oil wells held by Kurdish insurgents around the town of Kirkuk, setting many ablaze, rebel forces said. Kurdish resistance groups claimed they had now captured the whole of Kurdistan. (Reuter)

Medical briefing, page 21



IRAN-SAUDI ARABIA

Tehran and Riyadh resume diplomatic ties

FROM REUTERS IN NICOSIA

IRAN and Saudi Arabia are restoring diplomatic relations and patching up political and religious rifts which have destabilised the Gulf region.

A joint statement issued yesterday said ties would resume from March 26, ending a breach of nearly three years. It

gives Iran a stronger voice in regional politics at a time when its former foe, Iraq, is grappling with a nationwide revolt. The breakthrough comes after an agreement on Iranian participation in the annual haj (pilgrimage) to Mecca.

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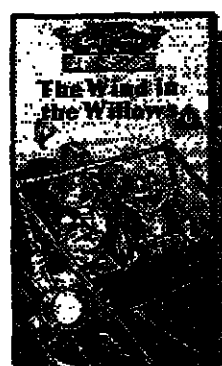
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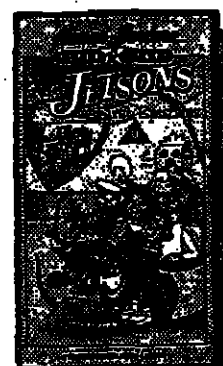
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STARVATION

Britain urges speedy end to delays in food supplies

By ADAM KELLNER in AMMAN
AND MICHAEL BRYNOR, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

BRITAIN has voiced growing concern at reports of impending starvation in Iraq, and is to urge the United Nations Security Council to cut the bureaucracy holding up the dispatch of urgent food shipments to civilian centres.

Officials in London say the latest report by a United Nations mission to Iraq painted a picture of epidemics and dire shortages, especially of basic foodstuffs such as flour, bread and tea, and of exorbitant prices. Many food items have increased 3,000 per cent since the start of rationing last year, and since the end of the Gulf war there has been an almost complete breakdown in production and distribution.

Britain is to urge the sanctions committee to give quick blanket approval for the shipment of humanitarian relief, and wants United Nations and International Red Cross officials to see that the food goes to the civilians who now face starvation, rather than to the Iraqi army.

But Britain is unlikely to approve the lifting of UN economic sanctions or the resumption of regular trade with Iraq by food-exporting companies as long as President Saddam Hussein remains in power. British officials said time was running short. Relief agencies had to co-ordinate ways of getting food and medicines into the country, and the UN should not be obliged to scrutinise every item in advance.

The UN delegation was headed by Martti Ahtisaari, who has returned to New York to brief the sanctions committee, and is expected to echo the views of aid workers that Iraq faces famine and widespread epidemics. Richard Reid, the director of UNICEF, the UN Children's Fund, said the absence of fuel meant electrically powered water purification plants and irrigation systems were paralysed, and no aid could be distributed.

"Whatever water you drink in Iraq is from rivers. All the sewage is flowing into the rivers," said Gianni Murzi, UNICEF's representative in Iraq. "For the first time we saw people begging and fetching food from the garbage."

UNICEF and other organisations are shipping in equipment, chlorine and aluminium sulphate to try to bring at least 11 gallons of potable water per head daily to the city of 4.5 million people before the onset of summer in early April, when an outbreak of water-borne diseases is feared.

Already many children are afflicted by diarrhoea and showing the initial symptoms of malnutrition. The officials said no cholera had been detected, but the disease is so contagious that experts believe detection of one case means about 10 per cent of the population would be infected. Mr Murzi said food was in the shops, but few people could afford it.

Although humanitarian material is allowed into Iraq, about 50 shiploads of medicines Iraq purchased before the crisis are reported to have been impounded at various ports around the world, largely because Baghdad refuses to apply for clearance as it rejects the sanctions regime.

Britain insists general sanctions must be maintained until a formal ceasefire is signed. In practice this means there will be no let-up in Iraq's international isolation as long as Saddam continues his suppression of the uprising against him.



Bombers' target: a Lebanese soldier guards cars wrecked in a bomb attack in Beirut in which Michel Murr, the defence minister, narrowly escaped assassination yesterday. Eight people died in the explosion

Minister escapes death in Beirut bomb

EIGHT people were killed and 25 injured when a car bomb exploded in Beirut yesterday near the car carrying the Lebanese defence minister, Michel Murr (Hachir Teimourian and Ali Jaber write from west Beirut). The minister escaped with superficial injuries. He was on his

way to a cabinet meeting at which the disbanding of all militias was to be approved. As the explosion happened in a Christian area of the city, and as the Lebanese Forces militia of Samir Geagea are expected to be disbanded, many believe the Christian militia would

benefit. Another theory is that the Israelis are unhappy about the government's success in extending the army's authority.

● Geagea resigns: Samir Geagea resigned from Lebanon's national unity government yesterday. (Reuters)



Murr: injured in bomb attack on his convoy

IRAQ

Baghdad accuses Iran over rebellion

From ASSOCIATED PRESS IN BAGHDAD

THE Speaker of Iraq's National Assembly, Saadi Mehdi Saleh, accused Iran yesterday of inciting the anti-Saddam rebellion in Iraq. "It has been established now that it was Iran who dispatched groups of saboteurs to do these acts," he told an emergency session of the assembly. "For a good time Iran was preparing large groups of saboteurs for this day to carry out its schemes."

It was the first time that Iraq has directly accused Iran of participating in the armed insurrections by Iraqi Shia Muslims in the south of the country and Kurds in the north. Previously, Iraq had said that the rebellion was backed by an American-Zionist conspiracy.

Mr Saleh told the 250 assembly members that they should discuss plans for "reconstructing what has been destroyed by the American-Zionist aggression and the mobs who took advantage of the circumstances which followed the aggression."

Arabs to review treaty

Cairo — The Arab League, one of the first victims of the Gulf conflict, is planning a close look at what went wrong with a 1959 defence treaty designed to deal with confrontations such as Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

The league is preparing for its first postwar meeting in Cairo on March 30. A senior official said this would be a step towards a renewed commitment by member states to their treaty obligations. The Arab League charter prohibits the use of force by member states against other members. If one invades another, the league council can decide on military measures to force it out.

Sailors accused

Manila — Three sailors have been accused of kidnapping and sabotage on board the carrier USS Ranger while it was deployed near the Gulf in January, a US Navy spokesman said. He said links between the men and a Muslim group in the United States that opposed the war were being investigated and they might face court martial proceedings. (Reuters)

Travel eased

Kuwait City — Kuwait will issue new exit permits to inhibit objections from Saudi Arabia which this week turned back hundreds of Kuwaitis trying to cross the border to stock up on provisions. Kuwait radio said. (Reuters)

Air emergency

Cairo — A Boeing 747 taking about 400 American troops home from the Gulf war made an emergency landing at Cairo airport, Egypt's national Middle East News Agency said. The troops disembarked safely. (Reuters)

TURKEY

Kurdish uprising mars festivities

From A CORRESPONDENT IN ISTANBUL

THE success of Kurdish rebels in northern Iraq is giving the neighbouring Turkish authorities little to celebrate at today's Noruz festivities. The holiday, which marks the Persian new year, is being observed by some ethnic Kurds in Turkey as an occasion to raise their grievances.

Police in centres with large Kurdish populations remain on their guard after violence marred a "sample" Noruz demonstration yesterday. A crowd in the southern city of Adana turned on police and left four police cars burning. The governor of Adana said police fired warning shots after they were attacked. About 80 people are still in custody, including the leader of a small parliamentary group of ethnic Kurdish MPs.

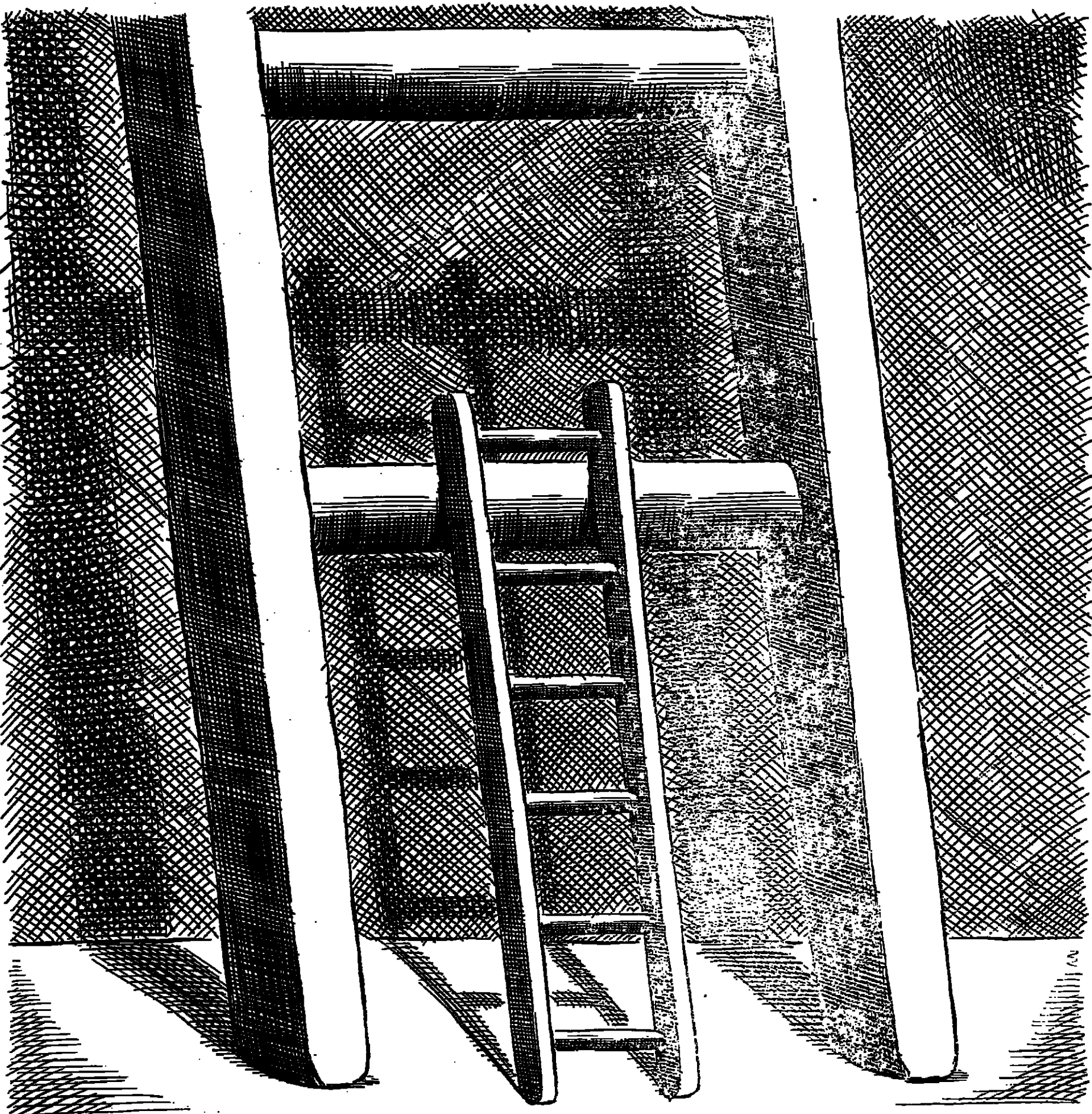
Turkey's liberal establishment believes such incidents confirm that the security forces are provoking the very civil disorder they are meant to crush. President Ozal, who is believed by some to be a belated convert to the liberals' cause, has recently proposed legislation that would give Kurds a right to speak their own language.

Many people here still believe that any concession to Kurdish desires for cultural autonomy will lead to demands for political independence.



Ozal: prepared to talk with Kurdish leaders

Kurdish political entity in northern Iraq. Kenan Evren, a former president of Turkey, accused Mr Ozal of playing a dangerous game that threatened the territorial integrity of the country. Mr Evren told a Turkish newspaper that his successor was being intimidated by the long-standing American policy to support a Kurdish political movement.



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Hurd urges Soviet republics to restrain nationalist impulse

FROM BRUCE CLARK IN KIEV

DOUGLAS Hurd, the foreign secretary, yesterday delivered one of the clearest appeals for restraint from nationalists on the Soviet Union's periphery that has been heard from a Western government.

His message came in a question-and-answer session with students at Kiev university, the scene late last year of angry demonstrations by radical anti-communist groups and supporters of Ukrainian independence. Asked about Britain's attitude to independence movements in the 12 non-Baltic republics, the foreign secretary replied: "We are not working for the disintegration of the Soviet Union. When Britain was decolonising, we resisted Soviet interference in that process."

He said that he hoped to see the Soviet Union changed through negotiations into a state where relations between the central authorities and the republics were "fair and therefore lasting". Britain, like most other Western nations, makes a distinction between the three Baltic states, whose annexation by the Soviet Union it has never recognised, and the other republics.

Mr Hurd issued a warning about what he called the "destructive impulses of old nationalism", which he said should be differentiated from legitimate national pride. "Europe has learned the hard

way in this century that crude nationalism of the old kind can turn pride into hatred and achievement into destruction," he said.

The foreign secretary gave the European Community as an example of how nations with different cultures could co-operate without compromising their identities. However, he stopped short of stating that he opposed the idea of Ukrainian independence, for which there is strong support in the west of the republic. "I believe that we (Britain and the Ukraine) will co-operate, whatever your constitutional relationship is with Moscow," he said, adding that the latter was a matter for Ukrainians to decide.

The minister's presence in the Ukraine, where he made a 24-hour visit on the way to Moscow, illustrates an effort by Britain to intensify contacts with the Soviet republics, but officials have underlined that this effort should not compromise Britain's links with the central Soviet authorities.

In Moscow, Mr Hurd's agenda will feature security arrangements in the Gulf region after the war, arms control, and economic questions, including the issue of about £120 million in unpaid debts owed by the Soviet Union to British companies. Officials said Mr Hurd would

be telling Aleksandr Bessmertnykh, his Soviet counterpart, that many small British companies have suffered as a result of these arrears, and that that will act as a disincentive for British business in the Soviet Union.

The foreign secretary used his speech to underline Britain's concern over the steps preventing ratification of the 35-nation treaty on conventional arms in Europe that was signed in Paris last November. "It would be a real setback if a treaty so painstakingly negotiated, so important for friendship between East and West, should fall at the last fence," he said.

Among the problems blocking ratification are Western objections to the Soviet reclassification of sections of land forces as naval, thus not covered by the accord.

Mr Hurd also raised the case of Stepan Ihnara, a radical opposition deputy who has been stripped of his parliamentary immunity and is awaiting trial on what his supporters claim are invented charges of assaulting a policeman.

According to officials at the meeting between Leonid Kravchuk, the Ukrainian president, and Mr Hurd, the Ukrainian leader spoke about the virtues of enhanced sovereignty for the Ukraine that fell short of secession.



Peace patrol: armed police in Albania preventing people from entering Durres port yesterday. They have been put in charge of distributing food supplies from Italy and have been told to stop the growing exodus of citizens from the country. The government has appealed for calm

Security alert as Muscovites brace for steep increases in prices

FROM MARY DEJEVSKY IN MOSCOW

CONCERN mixed with resignation pervaded Moscow yesterday as people faced the inevitability of sweeping price rises from April 2. With little more than tinned fish and seaweed in the shops at state prices, and limited amounts of sausage, butter and sugar obtainable with ration coupons, there was a sense that the situation could hardly get worse, and that even higher prices might be worth a try.

The authorities were taking no risks. Although the joint police and military street patrols were invisible, there was a noticeable increase in their traffic, with army vehicles parked outside public buildings and KGB security officers around Red Square and the Kremlin.

The Soviet government em-

barked on an intensive exercise to "sell" the new prices and the complicated package of compensation that will accompany them. Senior officials from state agencies responsible for employment, social security, state planning and pricing, came to a press conference to answer questions from Soviet and foreign reporters. The conference was subsequently shown on television, a technique born of the assumption that distrustful Russians are more likely to trust undertakings made in the presence of foreign journalists than given directly to the people.

Vladimir Shcherbakov, the deputy prime minister, admitted that the government could not afford to compensate everyone fully and was

concentrating on children, pensioners and others unable to earn their living. Adults would be given a minimum of 60 roubles (£60) extra a month, anything extra to be negotiated with the employer. Larger increases are planned for teachers, doctors and other professionals.

Compensation for children will comprise 40 roubles a month, with an annual lump sum payable per child depending on age and set at a minimum of 200 roubles. Neither sum will be taxed. Prices of children's clothes and shoes are likely to quadruple as many of the subsidies are cut.

According to Mr Shcherbakov, the compensation package will cost up to 300 billion roubles, most of which

is to be covered by the revenue from the increased prices. He estimated that the rouble "overhang" — the amount of roubles not backed by goods to buy — could be halved as a result of the price rises, but said that the consumer index, a concept new to the Soviet economy, would rise by between 60 and 70 per cent compared with 1990.

Many Russians are hoping for the introduction of a system of indexing wages and allowances, but Mr Shcherbakov said yesterday that no decision had been taken. He emphasised the point that the "increases" were designed to "stabilise" the market, combat speculation, and encourage people to work productively.

When price increases were first broached last May, emphasis was laid on the need to balance the market and bring prices into line with costs. A third element was the need to fight the black market. The new priority given to rewarding hard work suggests a recognition that disciplinary measures alone will not improve the supply situation.

Mr Shcherbakov said that next month's price increases would not be the last unpleasant measure. But some people question whether they will be enough to bring goods back into the shops, or curb the black market.

If the strikes affecting the coal mines spread and other workers decide the compensation offered is inadequate, the government may be forced to reconsider its priorities.

Bush cuts Polish debts

Washington — President Bush said yesterday that the United States would forgive 70 per cent of Poland's debt to Washington, as a reward for the moves Poland has taken towards democracy and a free-market economy.

"We want your economic transformation to succeed, your new democracy to flourish. And we call on other nations to follow our example," Mr Bush said as he announced the decision at a White House welcoming ceremony for President Walesa.

The Polish leader, who was beginning a week's visit to the United States seeking support for Polish reforms, told Mr Bush he was grateful for American help. "I know, Mr President, that you are a sincere friend of Poland. I am grateful to you for your extreme goodwill and interest in our problems," he said.

American officials have said debt forgiveness is crucial if Poland is to make an economic recovery after decades of communism. (Reuters)

Elite lose perks

Budapest — High-ranking members of Hungary's former communist party and government leaders who toed the party line, will be stripped of their pension perks, according to a bill passed by parliament. Former presidents and prime ministers will see their pensions halved.

Media liberated

Prague — Czechoslovakia's parliament has passed a law allowing independent television, radio stations and news agencies to be set up, ending a 40-year state monopoly. The country's Czech and Slovak republics will be able to issue licences to private individuals with immediate effect. (Reuters)

Spaniard held

Bayonne — French police said yesterday that a Spaniard, believed to be a key figure in the Eta Basque separatist group, was among seven people seized in raids on Monday. Jesus Arcauz-Arana was arrested in Biarritz. Police said he would be questioned in connection with the discovery of an arms cache in December 1989. (AFP)

Surprise catch

Hel, Poland — A 65ft Polish fishing boat landed a big catch — a 300ft Foxrot class Soviet submarine, which had to surface to untangle itself from fishing nets. Stefan Szczepanski, the skipper, said his nets snagged the submarine lying on the seabed in the Baltic. Its rudder and conning tower were damaged. (Reuters)

Romanians attack reforms

FROM REUTER IN BUCHAREST

THOUSANDS of Romanian workers, accusing the government of plunging them into poverty, marched through Bucharest yesterday to protest against price rises and market-economy reforms.

The march co-incided with the resignation of two of Romania's key economy ministers, Anton Vatescu, the trade and industry minister, and Teodor Stolojan, the finance minister. They complained that the price thaw on basic foods had been diluted and was not radical enough, after President Iliescu pressured the cabinet into softening the blow with cash handouts and food price limits. Adrian Severin, the reform minister, told a news conference that Petre Roman, the prime minister, now planned to head a new inner cabinet to steer the reforms, together with two

senior cabinet ministers. The softeners were introduced after trade unions called yesterday's demonstrations to force the government to drop the price liberalisation, freeze its reforms and consider alternatives. During the march, workers shouted: "Down with Iliescu" and "Down with the government". Reporters estimated the crowd at 10,000, while union leaders said it was 20,000-strong. The column marched from the central Revolution Square to parliament and planned to move on to the president's Cotroceni Palace.

The demonstration was called by the Alfa free trade union bloc, which claims 1.7 million members. "The streets will explode over the next two months," Alfa leader Dan Mocanescu said. The International Monetary Fund has pledged up to \$1 billion (£560,000 million) in financial support for Romania this year in exchange for the reforms.

meetings without that commitment. Instead, he and Milan Kucan, the Slovene president, are proposing direct talks between the heads of the republics today.

Ante Markovic, the prime minister, has demanded that economic reforms should have priority and has said all along that the danger of civil war was being deliberately exaggerated. Mr Jovic said that, with such an attitude, Mr Markovic was speeding the disintegration of the country.

Since last Friday, the military had cut off all direct contacts with the collective federal presidency, which is the commander in chief. But sources close to the federal government said it was through Mr Markovic's intervention and mediation that a compromise was reached.

Reluctant army forces Serbia's hand

FROM DESSA TREVISAN AND PATRICIA KOZA IN BELGRADE

SERBIAN leaders backed down yesterday and urged Borisav Jovic to stay on as federal president while opposition leaders attacked him for behind-the-scenes manoeuvring that had worsened Yugoslavia's political difficulties.

The appeal was voiced by Aleksander Bakovic, head of the Socialist party caucus in the Serbian assembly, which holds a two-thirds majority of the deputies. But the move was clearly orchestrated by Slobodan Milosevic, the Serbian president, who had arranged for the resignation of Mr Jovic last Friday, crippling the collective federal presidency. Mr Milosevic obviously counted on the army's support at a time when his own standing in Serbia has been badly shaken, and when

an ever larger number of groups and institutions are demanding that he step down.

The army, which has said it will not interfere in the political process, and would turn out on to the streets only to prevent civil war, has now clearly dissociated itself from his policy.

Analysts believe Mr Jovic, a close ally of the army's high command, tendered his resignation to clear the way for military intervention that would preserve, by force, the six-republic Yugoslav federation dominated by Serbia. He said he had submitted his resignation because the majority of the eight-man federal presidency refused to give the military the power to keep order in the country.

The presidency is scheduled to meet again today to resume negotiations on Yugoslavia's future. Croatia, however, insists on a firm commitment that the army will remain in its barracks and its president, Franjo Tudjman, said he would not take part in the

meetings without that commitment. Instead, he and Milan Kucan, the Slovene president, are proposing direct talks between the heads of the republics today.

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Milosevic: orchestrated the Serbian about-turn

Camp survivors resurrect Vietnam spectre

FROM PHILIP JACOBSON IN PARIS

GHOSTS of France's long and bloody war in Vietnam are haunting the nation as political passions become inflamed over the case of an elderly academic, Georges Boudarel. Almost 40 years ago, as a committed partisan of the Vietnamese guerrillas fighting for independence from Paris, he helped run Camp 113 where French army prisoners struggled to survive in conditions of terrible hardship.

By some estimates, more than 80 per cent of the POWs in that camp died. Some who survived are behind the pressure to have M Boudarel — whose involvement as a propaganda specialist was covered by a previous amnesty — charged with crimes against humanity. Since French law does not recognise amnesty or the passage of time in relation to such crimes, M Boudarel, now lecturer in

Vietnamese studies at Paris-Jussieu university, could still be charged.

That is the desire of the hardline French right, for whom defeat in Vietnam remains a raw and painful memory. Jean-Marie Le Pen, the leader of the National Front, fought there, as did M Boudarel's principle accuser, the former government minister Jean-Jacques Baudet, a prisoner of war for four years. National Front supporters placed a wreath "in the memory of French soldiers who died in Vietnam camps" at the Arc de Triomphe earlier this week, while other militants denounced M Boudarel as a "traitor and collaborator".

From the left have come equally predictable petitions saluting M Boudarel's involvement with the Vietnam and warning against a renewed hunt for scapegoats for France's military defeat. However, the Communist party is keeping a discreet distance. Its veteran leader,

Georges Marchais, says that while there should be no exception from amnesties, he could not support M Boudarel if it were proved he had ordered physical torture.

This does not appear to be the case, but former POWs speak, with great bitterness, of their fellow Frenchman's attempts to brainwash them, of grueling forced marches designed to break their spirit and of capricious punishment. One accused M Boudarel of forcing prisoners to catch a quota of flies every day: those who failed, he said, had to hand their meagre ration of rice to the more successful, which amounted to a death sentence.

In his defence, M Boudarel says the Vietnamese lacked provisions and medicine, and rejects the high estimates of deaths among the prisoners of Camp 113. He says he was "an ideological captive" of his time, and acted on anti-colonial sentiments that were widely shared

by the French left of the day. As his defenders point out, it was the French who introduced napalm to Vietnam in the early 1950s. They do not add that Ho Chi Minh's guerrillas perpetrated the earliest massacres of their fellow Vietnamese.

For the newspaper *Liberation*, the real danger of the controversy over M Boudarel — whom many consider a minor figure — is that it could resurrect the violent divisions of the era of the war, which was dirty on both sides. For the government, already in difficulties over whether to authorise trials for crimes against humanity of several Frenchmen who collaborated with the nazis, the Boudarel affair is a hot potato. The indications are that there will be no official intervention as *Liberation* noted, the authorities have nothing to gain by disinterring France's Vietnam years, with all the grief they represent.

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Anatole Kaletsky, economics editor, contrasts the long-term and short-term effects of Lamont's Budget

All the world rues a VAT increase



Lamont: pain in the short-term?

Most people over 30 remember the political and economic anguish that followed Sir Geoffrey Howe's decision virtually to double VAT from 8 to 15 per cent in 1979. Not only did it accelerate inflation and set off wage claims of up to 20 per cent that summer, it also contributed to a collapse in the Tories' opinion poll ratings that continued for three years, until the Falklands war.

Did Norman Lamont forget this when he designed the centrepiece of Tuesday's Budget, the increase in VAT and excise duties to pay for the enthusiasm of the poll tax? To judge by experience, in other countries too, this was a decision the government may live to regret.

The Howe increase was much bigger than the one announced on Tuesday, and occurred against the background of rapidly accelerating worldwide inflation, in contrast to the disinflationary environment today. Yet there were a number of lessons from that experience that

may prove relevant this year. The 1979 VAT increase, like the one this week, was presented as a shift in the tax burden, not an addition. The VAT revenue was used to finance a cut in income taxes announced at the same time, and, because the total tax burden was raised only slightly, the Chancellor argued that higher VAT should not be taken into account by pay bargainners. The appeal was in vain.

In the months ahead, a similar campaign to draw attention to the impact on prices of lower poll taxes can be expected. The government's job will be easier because the present construction of the retail price index already includes the poll tax. Nevertheless, the psychological effects of higher

prices in the shops may well make an impression on wage bargainners and voters. They will believe inflation has risen, whatever the statistics may say.

Perceptions of this kind can all too easily feed into an inflationary spiral, particularly if retailers try to use the higher VAT rates as a cover for pushing through price increases they desperately need to restore their profit-margins.

In the past five years, Japan, Canada, Australia, Germany and New Zealand have all tried to introduce widely-based retail taxes or raise their VAT rates. In each case the outcome has been political disaster. Noboru Takeshita's government actually fell when its hated 3 per cent



Lamont: pain in the short-term?

consumption tax coincided with the Recruit share-dealing scandal. In Canada, Brian Mulroney is now the most unpopular prime minister on record, largely because of an 8 per cent goods and services tax imposed in January. In New Zealand and Australia, opinion polls showed big swings against the governments when similar taxes were introduced, despite the fact that most of the new revenues were being used to cut other taxes.

In Germany, Helmut Kohl recently announced that VAT would be raised by at least one percentage point to help finance reunification, but the tax was considered too controversial to implement immediately. Taxes on spending seem to cause more political headaches than taxes on income.

Mr Lamont could have looked to income tax instead. Raising the standard rate by 2p, or failing to index the personal allowances for inflation, would have raised most of the money he needed. Alternatively, he could have added, say, £2 billion to the public-sector borrowing requirement and raised the rest in income tax. Better still, he could have dipped deeper into the £8 billion cost of mortgage tax relief — a logical source of funds, surely, to mitigate a property tax.

Did the Chancellor therefore make a terrible mistake? In the short term, he probably did; but his decision was both politically and economically justifiable from a longer-term perspective. Politically, expenditure taxes become much less unpopular than taxes on income after they have been around for a few years. Once

embedded in prices they cease to be noticed.

The invisibility of VAT is one reason why it is popular with governments; the other is its economic efficiency. Over the past 20 years economists have almost unanimously concluded that governments should use spending taxes rather than income taxes to raise money. Expenditure taxes do not discourage work, they tend to stimulate savings and therefore investment, and they can be just as "progressive" as income taxes, in the sense that the rich can be made to pay more than the poor. In Britain, because VAT is not charged on food, fuel, housing, transport and children's clothes, which dominate the spending of the poor, it is more progressive than standard-rate income tax.

All this is perfectly true in the long run. But, as Keynes said, in the long run we are all dead, or at least out of office. The short-run political and economic cost of higher VAT will become all too evident from Monday week.

Intra-galactic warfare

Nigel Hawkes

An entertaining row is brewing between the ranks of astronomers and their cousins from the wrong side of the blanket, astrologers.

The argument pits the nation's best-known astronomer, Patrick Moore, against the chairman of the Association of Professional Astrologers, Michael Harding. In the middle is an Oxford historian, Allan Chapman, whose article deriding astrology as "a sub-culture of the superstitious, half-educated, and foolish" appeared in a monthly magazine, *Astronomy Now*, of which Dr Moore is editor-in-chief.

With Mr Harding at their head, astrologers besieged the editorial offices of the magazine with requests for the right of reply. The man responsible for day-to-day editorial control, Timothy Lyster, was inclined to grant these requests until overruled by "higher editorial authority" — Dr Moore.

Mr Harding regards this as censorship. "It is very improper of an allegedly scientific magazine to refuse to publish a reply to an article that was full of mistakes," he says. "Patrick Moore should follow the established criteria and courtesies of scientific publishing, and provide space for a reply."

There seems little chance of that. Dr Moore, at present on an astronomical visit to the Soviet Union, is proving a hard man to track down, while Mr Lyster is keeping his head below the parapet. Astrologically speaking, the planets do not seem to be adopting a favourable aspect as far as Mr Harding is concerned.

He need hardly worry. The survival of astrology is beyond argument, or logic. Few people can resist the occasional skim through the astrology columns of newspapers, and Ronald Reagan — by general consent a successful president — seems to have made few decisions without the aid of a clairvoyant. All over the world the ideas of astrology, discredited by the rise of science in the 17th century, continue to survive, to the disgust of scientists and historians like Dr Chapman, who is the senior tutor in the Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies at St Michael's Hall, Oxford.

In the article that started all the fuss, he portrayed modern astrology as the tattered remnant of a body of knowledge that an educated man in 1600 might have accepted as true. His grandson in

1660 would have been experiencing serious doubts, and by 1700 "astrology had virtually assumed the role it was to retain down to our own day: a fringe pursuit, or at least a world view and set of expectations associated with the scientifically uneducated".

Astronomers as revered as Copernicus, Tycho Brahe and Johann Kepler practised astrology, though all made discoveries that undermined it. By the end of their lives all three were sceptics, Dr Chapman says, a point contested by Mr Harding, who claims Kepler was a practising astrologer until the day he died.

Today, according to Dr Chapman, even astrologers no longer believe in the theory that underpins their art, that seven planets, each linked with a metal, exert an influence on the vital forces or "humours" that determine human happiness. (Any that do believe this have the difficulty of explaining away the three extra planets — Uranus, Neptune and Pluto — discovered since.)

How, then, has astrology survived? Dr Chapman regards it as a corpse propped up by the unproven crutch of psychiatry and endorsed by credulous people who live in a world of science and technology without attempting to understand it. "When knowledge of the natural world is so fragmentary, there are no grounds upon which critical opinions can be based, so astrology, witchcraft and nuclear energy can happily live side by side in the same mind," he suggests.

All this puts Mr Harding into a bad humour. His small association, 30-strong, is trying to make astrology respectable by distancing it from the star-sign columns. "They are just devices to sell newspapers," he says. Research in France, he insists, has shown a link between personality and date of birth which confirms the predictions of astrology. He will even invade Dr Chapman's territory to give a summer school in astrology at Jesus College, Oxford, in August this year.

Will all this win him the right of reply in *Astronomy Now*? It seems unlikely. Astronomers can believe in black holes, or quasars, or galaxies that explode with the power of a million suns, so long as there is supporting evidence. But to them there is nothing quite as passé as a discredited theory, unless it is the people who believe in it.

By an odd coincidence, two of the smallest unions in the country are among the most prominent: the National Union of Journalists, which is prominent obviously because, after all, we write the newspapers, and Equity, which is prominent because it is often literally in the limelight. But the leaders of these organisations have something else in common, which is that most of their time has to be spent not furthering the interests of their members but in an everlasting internecine struggle between those who want to run the union for the benefit of its subscribers and those who want to run it to bring nearer the glorious day when the Queen is thrown out of Buckingham Palace and replaced by a wax effigy of Trotsky.

The NUJ is in no dreadful state — it will very soon be bankrupt — but I cannot bear to write about it, lest I should burst into tears. But the goings-on of Equity do not bring me to tears, and for many years I have chronicled with mingled wonder and hilarity the course of the organisation that I dubbed Vanessa's Loonies. The name, I am pleased to say, has stuck, but for those who are coming new to the story, I should explain that Vanessa Redgrave (who is still, in the time not used for bringing about the revolution, one of the finest actresses on our stage), together with her brother Corin (equally fierce in her determination to overthrow the bourgeoisie but not in his sister's class as an actor) have founded many a coven of like-minded greasypaint revolutionaries, only to see them, one by one, crumble into dissonance as members depart to set up covens of their own. I think that the correct name of the Loonies at the moment (it changes twice weekly except in high summer) is the Marxist party, and my spies tell me that it has between 1½ and 1¾ members.

You may be wondering why anybody in Equity would take any notice of this outfit, with its ever-thinning ranks and inevitable tendency to fission; the answer is that for years — literally years — the Loonies brought Equity close to collapse. Because Equity does not work on the system of branches, but on a unitary plan, meetings are unit-wide, and the Loonies kept requisitioning meetings; the rules obliged the union's leaders to call a meeting every



time a number of members (easily gathered by the Loonies) demanded one, and the notices they had to send out, together with the cost of the hire of the venue (usually a theatre, on a Sunday) would eventually have ensured Equity's bankruptcy.

But Loonies never give up. Deprived of their most potent weapon, they have sought assiduously for some other means of furthering their cause. Because the Redgrave siblings and their tiny band of followers are so well known as Loonies, they stand little chance of succeeding in Equity elections; they have therefore cast about for members who could, though not registered Loonies, be relied upon to sing from the same hymn-book.

There is an Equity election in progress at this moment; it is for the important post of general secretary, and the ballot closes a week today. There are three candidates. One is Tony McEvoy, who

proudly announces in his election address that he is a member of the Workers Revolutionary party and includes in his programme: "Equity must take the lead within the TUC to demand a general strike to bring down the Major government and end all its loathsome policies." A fierce fellow is our Tony, it seems. Still, you know where you stand with him.

Of course, his stated aims and objectives are indistinguishable from those of the Loonies, but it is one of the world's wonders that the groupuscules of the left hate their absolutely identical rivals far more than they hate the capitalist oppressors, and this attitude has a long tradition behind it. Chester wrote of an innocent who "could tell the difference between Mr Asquith and Mr Balfour, but could not tell one kind of Socialist from another kind of Socialist". The official Loonies have therefore refused to throw their enormous army into the battle on Mr McEvoy's side, though the masses rank of the two groups could command anything up to 25 votes.

We look, therefore, for the real Loony, and to our astonishment we cannot find one. The other two candidates are Ian McGarry and David Hargreaves, and at first it is difficult to see which is the one whom moderate voters (the great majority, after all) would wish to see elected; both election addresses are couched in calm and unexcited terms. Does it then matter which should be backed by the moderates; and if it does, how may he be recognised?

Equity, like some other organisations, has a practice of allowing or inviting nominations in support of the respective candidates. Naturally, each candidate seeks nominations from names that carry weight, and by careful study of the lists it is not difficult to spot the views of a candidate.

I carefully studied the lists of nominations; Mr McGarry has in his camp such performers as Nigel Davenport, Peter Plowrie (who was Equity's general secretary for many years, and whose hair turned white from battling with the Loonies), Paul Eddington, Rich-

ard Attenborough, Albert Finney, Hugh Manning, Bill Owen and many more of a like mind; clearly a moderate candidate fit for moderate voters. Were there then two moderate candidates, dangerously splitting the vote?

There was only one way to find out: examine the Hargreaves list of nominations. I did, and within seconds the answer was clear. His supporters include Vanessa and Corin Redgrave, Frances de la Tour and Kika Markham — a solid block of long-serving Loonies. Whether Mr Hargreaves is actually a Loony member I do not know; Equity rules do not require candidates to state what organisations they belong to. But Vanessa and her Loonies would hardly vote for a capitalist tool or reactionary fascist grinder of the faces of the poor, indeed, they would be very unlikely to vote at all unless there was a candidate to their political liking.

There is another clue, though you have to burrow deep to find it; happily, I have spent so many years burrowing deep in such matters that I now have earth permanently in my eyebrows. On October 9, Mr Hargreaves proposed an unsuccessful motion for Equity, which reads in part:

Whilst this Government is making colossal cuts in public spending, including the Arts, it is spending £2m a day... in preparation for a war... This union is absolutely opposed to this war, and our members will not collaborate in any way in the entertaining of the troops... we will terminate our agreement with the Ministry of Defence which allows programmes involving our members being shown... to British forces... [My italics.]

It may or not be significant that Mr Hargreaves's campaign leaflet bears no supporters' names and indeed no reference to them. But by their nominations shall we know them. As I say, I do not know whether Mr Hargreaves is a sympathiser of the Loonies; but the Loonies certainly sympathise with him. I shall now, of course, be accused of McCarthyism, of guilt by association and even of eating biscuits in bed. I shall bear the indictments as well as I may, and urge Equity members to vote for Mr McGarry, just in case.

...and moreover

CLEMENT FREUD

The myopic pygmies who run racing have turned the sport into a pursuit in which the wishes of the crowd feature hardly at all. Orderliness takes precedence, with many sordid and frustrated ex-servicemen designated by the men in hats to ensure that folk desist from doing what they would like to do. If there is a way of saying no, they find it with a grunt and a scowl.

One had forgotten that racing can be fun — until last Friday at Cheltenham: no gatemen searching your bags, feeling your pockets, looking for your lapel badge or scanning your face lest you might have been warned off Newmarket Heath. On the day after the National Hunt Festival, the West Country course presented the acceptable face of racing, as the authorities smiled upon a unique charitable programme in which anyone able to raise £1,000 for the cause could enter to horse, wear multi-coloured silks, come under starter's orders, ride the hallowed turf and realise a fantasy.

Actors and newspaper editors, housewives, milkmen, plumbers, company directors, a detective inspector, and a literary agent sponsored by most of his authors, took part as a consequence the hungry of Malawi, the starving of Sudan and the sick and underprivileged of Britain and Africa — also a host of others in need of help — will benefit.

I fervently hope that this was a sign of things to come, for it was uplifting: a woman pushing a pramful of babes planned herself

in the centre of the parade ring, relatives of stable lads, friends of photographers and the buffet lady's niece wandered around the stewards' room; even a few of racing's great and good, and many of racing's nice people, turned up to lend gravitas and their taste.

There was no tote; only three bookmakers stood. For those who noted that their boards gave poor value for money (were, in technical terms, hideously "over-round") it was heartening to witness that in the first race of the afternoon they were taken to the cleaners. While a thousand or more people backed their rumble fancies with coinage of the realm, a dozen or so plunged on the winner with sizeable collections of £20 notes. It is not often that you can make money backing a fancied Lincoln runner ridden by a Newmarket trainer's assistant to a journeyman quadrupled with a marchioness in the saddle.

All credit to Ed Gillespie and Mark Kershaw of Cheltenham for arranging this so brilliantly to Comic Relief and The Year of Sport for the concept, Chris Haines of the Jockey Club for egregious unsoundness in allowing it to happen, and all who took part and sponsored and turned up and wore red noses and sold balloons; also to those who sold red noses and bought balloons.

My daughter Emma rode in the third race, the Courage Celebrity Challenge "over about four furlongs", for which she won a golden-looking trophy, as did the riders of the nine horses

that finished in front of her; and Mr Alan Titchmarsh, the distinguished horticulturalist, who did not. In the words of Mr Davy Jones, the winner and an erstwhile Monkee, "someone has to be last". After hiding her weight from the clerk of the scales, "honestly, that nice stone is mostly my boots and the saddle", Emma handled the contest with enviable aplomb. Mounted on a pony that stood all of 12 hands, she rose to the trot to the "about four furlongs" start (few noticed that this was almost exactly two-and-a-half furlongs from the finish) and at the "off" tucked in behind the field as befitted a Shetland taking on the elite Welsh cobs of the local riding schools. Passing the post she waved her arms like a dervish — reminiscent of the Duchess of York when she was still enjoying things.

The animal lobby will be heartened to learn that her mount showed no signs of distress. As Em trotted him back to the enclosure, the beast was not blowing enough to extinguish a candle, nor was there a suspicion of sweat as the saddle was removed. "Wasn't that terrific," she said as she dismounted, "weren't you proud? Did you see me center? Did you back me? What were my odds?" I replied: "Yes, yes, yes, no, to one."

There were seven races, 76 runners, upwards of £100,000 raised for the cause. "Wow," a word my daughter no longer uses now she is getting elderly, sums it up to a nicety.

Budgeting for 20

Is the shoemaker's wife the best shod after all? When Michael Heseltine has announced the results of his review of the poll tax today, he can sit down and reflect with satisfaction on the savings made to date in his own backyard. As a landowner, Heseltine pays the council tax bills of his employees — £600 each from next month for the 20 people on his 800 acres of Oxfordshire — and the Budget reduction of £140 will save him £2,800.

The Queen, too, will benefit. She spends an estimated £100,000 to cover the community charge for 270 staff at Sandringham and Balmoral, and Buckingham Palace confirmed yesterday that the practice of paying the charge for all was being reviewed. "It's hypothetical at this stage. It will be looked at when more is known," says the palace. The Duke of Westminster, Britain's wealthiest man, increased the salaries of his estate workers to cover the charge, but they are unlikely to suffer a pay cut in the wake of the Budget announcement. A spokeswoman for the duke said: "I cannot think that we will take it away from them. We will re-examine the whole thing once details of the government's review are known."

Viscount Ridley, whose brother Nicholas steered the initial poll-tax legislation through the Commons, pays the £440 tax for 25 employees on his Northumberland estate. "I will continue to pay it for them," he says. "I will also reimburse them if they become liable for any income-tax charge on the payments. I will review it when the poll tax finally goes."

Heseltine will also continue to foot the bill for his employees until a new system is in place. Last year Heseltine said: "I have a number of people who work for



me and live in accommodation which comes rate and rent free. It's only right that it should continue under the poll tax." Heseltine's office now says: "That statement still stands."

Badminton cricket
While the great and the good of artistic Britain fret about the fate of the Badminton cabinet, one person remains relaxed about the treasurer's final resting place: its prospective owner, Mrs Barbara Johnson. The American heiress, who bought the cabinet at Christie's last year for £8.5 million, says that if Britain manages to raise the money to save the cabinet, that's fine by her.

What is more, Britain has all the time in the world to try to raise the funds. In a letter to Simon Jervis, director of the Fitzwilliam Museum and head of the appeal to save the cabinet for the nation, she says: "If the committee prolongs the decision to give the export licence, I would not oppose that extension. They can take as long as they need to raise the funds to purchase the cabinet. I am willing to do this for England." Jervis describes Mrs Johnson as "perfectly courteous. She is content for the cabinet to stay in England if we raise the money." Her relaxed attitude is in sharp contrast to Christie's, keen that a licence be granted immediately. Jervis, meanwhile, continues

his fund-raising, admitting "there have been no dramatic breakthroughs yet". He has been disappointed in at least one audacious appeal: to Mrs Johnson herself. For all her courtesy about the future home of the cabinet, she declined.

Among the women

Lynnda Chalker, for so long the second lady of the parliamentary Conservative party, picked up the lunch bill on Budget day for the party's former first lady, Margaret Thatcher. The occasion was a private lunch of women Tory MPs in Mrs Thatcher's honour held at L'Amico restaurant near the Commons.

The guests included Lady Oppenheim-Barnes, the former consumer affairs minister, Virginia Bottomley, Dame Jill Knight, Angela Rumbold and Teresa Gorman. The party's self-proclaimed matriarch was flanked by Marion Roe, the former environment minister, and Mrs Chalker. It was the first time Mrs Thatcher had been to the restaurant, a favourite watering-hole of Conservative ministers.

"Norman Tebbit and Cecil Parkinson had promised they would bring Mrs Thatcher," says manager Bruno Carini. "We were beginning to think we would never

see her." But if Mrs Thatcher has warmed to female company, she has not defected to those whose loyalty did not stand the test. Missing from the gathering were Edwina Currie and Emma Nicholson, the only female MPs to speak out against her during the leadership election.

Apartheid crumbles. Denis Goldberg, a leading white ANC activist who was imprisoned for 21 years, has just returned to South Africa from exile in Britain. He took with him two consigner-loads of ANC T-shirts and was promptly stopped by customs. As officials sniffily examined the merchandise, he braced himself for arrest. He was amazed to be briskly waved through.

Exhibit A

Clashing her eyes across the Atlantic for funds for her foundation, Mrs Thatcher must be envious of the money rolling in for Ronald Reagan's museum in Los Angeles. The multimillion-dollar building commemorating his White House years opens in November, beside the Reagan Library, which the former president proudly showed Mrs Thatcher during his eightieth birthday celebrations. Visitors will see some of the 30,000 gifts given to the former president by foreign heads of state, and a replica of the oval office. They can also use an interactive video to ask Reagan questions and hear his recorded answers.

Mementoes from world leaders will feature prominently. "I do not yet know what we have from Mrs Thatcher, but there will undoubtedly be something," says Garber. A spokesman for the former prime minister confirms she would be receptive to a request for an item for the institution. Perhaps, as an example of the tribulations of state, she could send a leadership election nomination paper, signed by Douglas Hurd and John Major.



No Currie?

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THE POLITICS OF FAMINE

Relief agencies are again claiming that millions face starvation in Africa, with at least 13 million seriously at risk in Sudan and Ethiopia alone. Charities (and the United Nations) have done their cause no good in the past by exaggerating. Last year the UN claimed that 1.8 million Angolans faced starvation. Civil war in Angola condemned millions to go short of food each year, but the true figure for those "desperately in need" — likely to starve without emergency aid — is nearer 150,000.

But even on the most sober calculation, a human catastrophe is in the making in Sudan; and in Ethiopia, even more people are now at risk of starvation than in 1984. Unless the West is prepared to let them die in the hope that this will shame their governments into reform, there is no alternative to yet another massive international relief effort. But steps must simultaneously be taken to break this dreadful pattern. Otherwise the operation will have to be repeated year after year.

In Ethiopia, that should be possible. Foreign mediators have brought about the first serious negotiations between President Mengistu's government and Tigrayan and Eritrean insurgents, in order to open food aid corridors through the war zones. This success needs to be built on to end Ethiopia's two civil wars, and achieve a better deal for the country's peasants.

Were it not for these wars, which have brought rebel forces to within a day's drive of the capital, Addis Ababa, comparatively little foreign food would be needed. The crops have failed in the northern war zones of Eritrea, parts of Tigray and Wollo and in the arid Ogaden to the east, but the average Ethiopian harvest last year was 6 per cent up on that of 1989, and 14 per cent up in the central province of Shoa.

War disrupts distribution. Surpluses cannot reach the north and markets cannot operate. But the surpluses, ironically, are the indirect result of the war, which has so bankrupted the exchequer and deprived President Mengistu of national and international support that he was forced last year

to announce the dismantling of his Marxist dictatorship. The government promised to restore individual land ownership, reduced the quotas farmers were required to sell the state and paid more for what it bought.

Crop yields improved dramatically. Without waiting for legislation, Ethiopia's peasants seized on this sign of slackening state control to dismantle the hated producer co-operatives and return to their homesteads, deserting the collectivised villages and resettlement camps into which they had been herded. This had nothing to do with political reforms. For all President Mengistu's promises of pluralist democracy, the country remains a military dictatorship. But the government, crippled by its losing battle against the insurgents, is unable or unwilling to control the farmers. Even in the shrinking areas theoretically under Addis Ababa's control, its authority is threadbare.

President Mengistu's offer last month of externally guaranteed federal status for Eritrea suggests that even he now wants to end these internal wars, which he is losing and which are costing 70 per cent of Ethiopia's budget. The country's foreign exchange reserves are at their lowest for 20 years and Soviet military aid is shrinking. Within his administration, pressures for peace and political reform are growing. Western governments should offer Ethiopia long-term aid as well as emergency relief, but with stringent political and economic conditions attached, including a negotiated peace, abolition of the one-party state and legislation to safeguard and extend the economic freedom the peasants have so eagerly seized.

Western governments have been properly chary of sending help that would merely shore up the Mengistu dictatorship. But conditional aid would be a poisoned chalice for the president, who can neither survive without foreign aid nor is likely to survive serious reforms. Peace and famine relief must go together. Unless the fighting stops, Ethiopians will go on starving. The West has never had a better opportunity to force Ethiopia's dictator to come to terms.

ANGST-RIDDEN GERMANY

The monetary union between East and West Germany forged last summer has been "a disaster", according to the Bundesbank president, Karl Otto Pöhl. He added that European monetary union (EMU), at least without far greater convergence of Europe's national economies, would have equally dire results. Since he did not spell these out, it may be observed that the proportion of those unemployed or on short time in the new German *Länder* or provinces is now approaching 40 per cent. Investment is sluggish, and though the migration to the west has been stemmed, this has only concentrated discontent in the east. This week 70,000 Leipzigers marched in protest.

Herr Pöhl was not being wise after the event when he pronounced his damning judgment on Chancellor Kohl's management of monetary union. He had attacked the unseemly haste with which the Deutschmark was imposed on the east at the time. Yet his remarks were dismissed out of hand in Bonn. Yesterday's report in Germany's paper of record, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, all but suppressed them. This week the German cabinet did not even discuss the civil unrest. Herr Kohl has shunned the easterners since they handed him his majority in last year's general election. The German eagle's head is invisible, and its hindquarters resemble those of an ostrich.

The catastrophe is social as well as economic: western indifference is met by eastern envy, moral apathy succeeds silent resistance, and long-submerged despair wells up in contemplation of the wasted past. Many of the hardships associated with the transition from socialist planning to capitalism were inevitable. But precipitate monetary union has done much to create an eastern inferiority complex which might have been avoided.

A nation which is not at peace with itself cannot provide the leadership which would

devolve upon the Germans under EMU. The Germans are still in the throes of a titanic political upheaval. A mixture of panic and paralysis has gripped the body politic. Germany's uncertain response to the outbreak of war in the Gulf was unpopular abroad. A somewhat chastened chancellor has now proposed an amendment which would stop future governments hiding behind the German constitution whenever its allies request the use of military force outside the Nato area. Yet the leadership of the opposition Social Democrats (SPD), who can block constitutional reform, this week voted to restrict German troops to United Nations peace-keeping forces.

Two grave challenges now face Germany as a nation: preventing the collapse of confidence in the east, and shouldering a greater international role. So impressive last year, Herr Kohl now looks out of his depth. His popularity has slumped lately. Though rumours of a grand coalition with the SPD may be discounted, the Kohl era could come to an end no less abruptly than Mrs Thatcher's. Adenauer, Erhard, Brandt and Schmidt were all forced by their own parties into resignation.

The Germany of the next decade will be largely preoccupied with the tension between its own east and west and will have little stomach to pursue the European unionism beloved of EC leaders in the 1980s. Perhaps the Benelux countries are happy to pool their remaining sovereignty with such a Germany in Herr Pöhl's preferred "two-speed" Europe. Other Europeans, including the British, will naturally be reluctant to risk the fate of eastern Germany. While "convergence" is a reasonable goal of British policy, not least since it implies competitive equality with the richest nation in Europe, convergence overnight under full monetary union holds serious dangers. Herr Pöhl's warning is for all Europeans to heed.

BUT IT STILL HURTS...

The National Backpain Association says sick leave from bad backs cost British industry 46.5 million days lost work in 1988, worth more than £4.5 billion. The precision of the figures is in sharp contrast to the vagueness of the concept: the severity of back pain, like a headache, is as long as a piece of tightly coiled string. The end of such subjectivity is in sight, however, for a machine has been invented which will give an exact measurement, if not of the pain then of the disorder causing it. It is, of course, being called a back-pain lie detector. The idea could spread.

Millions of those lost days are being claimed by back-pain malingers, promoters of the machine have claimed. Either they have no pain at all (it got better long ago) or they are not nearly as bad as they say they are. Employees have found an alleged pain in the back to be a safer and less disapprovable way of evading work even than the death of a maiden aunt in faraway places. One American company reduced its absenteeism by half after it insisted staff claiming back pain should be tested by one of these machines. Claims for disability have been reduced by the same method, and even, in at least one case, increased.

The primary aim is therapeutic, which is why hospitals with back clinics are expressing interest. Back pain, at least among those really suffering from it, is never very precise in its location, hampering efforts to treat it by strengthening the parts of the back which are weak or damaged. The machine names

the guilty spot with transducers and strain gauges as the patient twists and turns. Grateful patients are returning to health, or a reasonable approximation of it, twice as fast — or so the sales pitch claims.

Science should not be blamed for the uses to which its inventions are put, and many a discovery designed to relieve suffering has had the opposite effect. The back-pain lie detector was not built to detect back-pain lies, though that is how it will be used. After not very long, the principle is bound to be extended, lie detection streamlined, all the complicated strapping in, measuring and hooking up to computers eliminated.

Other machines exist which are the sworn enemies of terminological inexactitude, and they would work just as well at exposing other creative reasons for not being at work. Why use an expensive Isoteston B200, specific to back-lies, when any old lie detector will also spot the malingerers among those complaining of migraine, tennis elbow, or Dutch elm disease?

The ideal gadget would work over the phone, exposing the lie in the croaky weakness with which employees ring in to report influenza, feverish chills, or generic (cough, cough) upper respiratory infection. Transducers and strain gauges should be well up to testing the plausibility of a wifely "He can't come to the phone because he has lost his voice." The machine could even be programmed to bleat "Say — Ahhh!", and mark the performance out of ten.

The Chancellor rings the changes

From Mrs Rebecca King
Sir, My work as a training consultant means that I travel widely. Following several incidents of assaults on women travellers, including the murder of a pregnant woman on a motorway, my company put phones into the cars of women employees engaged in travel. Men do not get this "perk", now to be taxed by the Chancellor (Budget details, March 20).

Whilst the company pays for the installation, we pay for all calls, even those related to work. The phones have been put in as a considerate and thoughtful gesture towards security and peace of mind, and are not needed in the course of our work per se.

Knowing that I have this safety line in my car has been a great comfort to me and to my female colleagues.

Yours sincerely,
R. KING,
23 Chapel Lane,
Lapworth, Warwickshire,
March 20.

From the President of the International Institute of Communications
Sir, The Chancellor's imposition of a tax on portable phones does look to be an extraordinary move. Communications have long ceased to be a commodity divided up into tidy national markets and one of the primary reasons for the privatisation of British Telecom — praised in the same speech yesterday — was to enable it to compete effectively internationally.

The investment world wide in terrestrial and satellite hardware designed to deliver direct "wire-free" services to the individual runs billions of pounds and is growing significantly.

To see the British government which pioneered liberalisation of telecommunications services levying this kind of sanction on advanced technology, with the admitted objective of restricting it, does seem regressive to say the least.

Yours faithfully,
BRIAN QUINN, President,
International Institute of Communications,
Tavistock House South,
Tavistock Square, WC1,
March 20.

From Councillor Ruth Lyon
Sir, Thousands of charities up and down the country will most definitely not be thanking the Chancellor today. Any charity wanting to extend a building it owns or restore an existing building back to useful life will now have to pay VAT at 17.5 per cent instead of 15 per cent, and this from a government that claims to support the virtues of self-help, care in the community and the active citizen.

Ask the Treasury about this and it will agree that it is an anomaly in that new buildings for charities, as opposed to extensions or restora-

tions, do not attract any VAT at all. Year after year the government does nothing to rectify the position.

Is it too much to hope that this year the Chancellor will finally address this glaring anomaly when the Finance Bill is published?

Yours faithfully,
RUTH LYON,
Elmbridge Borough Council,
Town Hall,
New Zealand Avenue,
Walton-on-Thames, Surrey,
March 19.

From Mr Ivor Hall
Sir, By increasing VAT to 17.5 per cent the government is only encouraging the growth of the already vast, non-contributory black economy. Private homeowners are going to be further encouraged to pay cash for repairs and renewals.

The licensing of all self-employed operators and the removal of VAT on all residential building work would bring in far more income tax than the government will gain from the new level of VAT. Receipts for work done, with their accompanying guarantee of standard of workmanship and materials, would also give protection to the present cash-paying homeowner.

Yours faithfully,
IVOR HALL,
34 Bisham Gardens, N6,
March 19.

From Mrs Audrey Nellis
Sir, The people we all know who operate in the black economy and do not pay the income tax they should will now be paying extra tax because they can't buy without paying the increase in VAT. The savings there will surely mean that we are all benefiting.

Yours sincerely,
AUDREY NELLIS,
Sponner's,
28 Park Street Lane,
St Albans, Hertfordshire,
March 20.

From Mr P. J. Walsh
Sir, Does the new rate of VAT mean the reintroduction of the Vp? After all, goods worth £1 will now cost £1.175p "including VAT".

Yours faithfully,
P. J. WALSH,
Coolahass, Benington Road,
Butterwick,
Boston, Lincolnshire,
March 20.

From Mr Michael Corry-Reid
Sir, The Chancellor in his Budget speech likened himself to the great racehorse Desert Orchid — both grey, overweight, etc. Following his Budget proposals, perhaps after the next election they will have one further thing in common: both finishing third in their last race.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL CORRY-REID,
2 Old Brompton Road, SW7,
March 19.

Union recognition

From the General Secretary of the Engineers' and Managers' Association
Sir, TUC involvement in a statutory union recognition procedure (report, later editions, March 11) will be opposed by a number of affiliated unions to the TUC, including my own.

The very powerful political case for a statutory recognition procedure is to ensure that employees have an ability to join a union, and if enough of them do so, to require an employer to negotiate with that union.

For the TUC to be given a role to declare, irrespective of the wishes of the employees, which union is "appropriate" to them and which not, would be to sabotage the whole process from the beginning. For if the TUC can be given a say in whether a union is "appropriate" or not, how can the employer be denied a similar right?

In my opinion a statutory right to recognition is now so clearly established as a democratic right in the workplace that the TUC will be forced to drop its myopic condition.

Yours truly,
JOHN LYONS, General Secretary,
Engineers' and Managers' Association,
Station House, Fox Lane North,
Chertsey, Surrey,
March 11.

Child abuse cases

From the Missioner of the London Healing Mission

Sir, Your leading article of March 11, "The Salem syndrome", claimed that "an epidemic of wild suspicion against the innocent" has spread across the community; it seemed to suggest that there was no truth in allegations of ritual or satanic abuse.

I was sad to read such a suggestion, and the experience of the NSPCC, which you report today, confirms my view.

Our evidence here goes back 30 or 40 years. We are well aware of women, now in middle age, who have been ritually tortured as children and as young girls. They come here for emotional healing which can, indeed, be a lengthy process extending into years. I prefer not to cause distress to your readers by instancing the more extreme forms of torture applied to them.

We get women coming here who have been abused sexually by fathers and brothers in childhood, who have not dared to tell anyone through fear and guilt. The pain may have haunted them for years until, at last, through care and understanding, it can be released. But to

Salisbury Close

From the Under Secretary of State, Department of the Environment

Sir, Your article by Jonathan Meades on March 15, entitled "Murder at the cathedral", commented on my role in the possible Salisbury Close planning case. You will appreciate that, as a minister, I can take no part in any decision to call in a planning case which affects either my constituency or me personally; nor can I participate in the process of deciding any case which falls to be determined by the secretary of state for the environment in such circumstances.

These well-established rules are designed to buttress the system of

Marketing milk

From Mr R. W. Shepherd

Sir, Dairy farmers carry the additional risks of weather, disease and politics to complicate further the conduct of any business. Their product is short-lived and its flow from an animal source cannot be regulated as can a manufacturing process, so a vigorous marketing organisation is essential to the wellbeing of the industry (leading article, March 8).

A single co-operative for England and Wales would be no larger nor more monopolistic than co-operatives already existing in Denmark, Holland and France. After

Eve of decision thoughts on poll tax

From the Chairman of the Association of County Chief Executives

Sir, If the leak is to be believed (report, March 19) the package proposed by Mr Heseltine bears all the hall-marks of a hasty, unvaluated and uncensored proposal. It has some unpleasant overtones of much increased centralisation, with significant constitutional implications. The important question is not how many tiers of local government; but whether there is to be any significant local government at all.

Surely the message from the community charge difficulty is clear — major changes affecting all voters, brought in too speedily and without adequate thought, take a lot of pain and some considerable time and expense to unravel. Let the time and thought be given before the changes, if any, are implemented.

Yours faithfully,
R. J. CAPON, Chairman,
Association of County Chief Executives,
County Hall, Martineau Lane,
Norwich, Norfolk,
March 19.

From Mr Maurice Vassie
Sir, Apparently the government has chosen a three-person occupancy as being the average on which to base its alternative to the poll tax. Why? A detailed analysis, ward by ward, of the electoral register of one constituency in North Yorkshire, Selby, shows the number of enfranchised adults per dwelling as follows, in percentages:

One-person	19.5
Two-person	38.5
Three-person	36.0
Four or more persons	7.0

Multi-occupancy dwellings with four or more enfranchised adults occur predominantly in farming wards and in the select commuter villages. Single-person occupancies are concentrated in the inner town wards; these tend to consist of widows or widowers, probably also pensioners, in the sometime conjugal or family home with two or three bedrooms.

This would seem to render any new tax with either a head-count or bedroom-count content an electoral liability. Perhaps the distribution of dwellings by number of occupants in the Selby constituency is unique; but I doubt it.

Yours faithfully,
MAURICE VASSIE,
Cartmans Cottage,
Deighton, nr Escrick, York,
March 18.

From Sir Robert Booth

Sir, To combine an element of both a discredited poll tax and a defunct property tax, as now appears to be the government's plan, is to choose the worst of both worlds and the quickest route to electoral defeat. The fairest, most efficient and easily administered solution is for a local government tax to be collected for councils by the Inland Revenue.

This would be achieved through a

deduction from personal and other allowances in the annual notice of coding for PAYE, which is already computerised and results in automatic deduction of tax each month. There can be no non-payers. With one collecting agency instead of two, administrative savings would be immense.

That basically is the solution which was overwhelmingly preferred by the voters in Ribblesdale Valley.

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT BOOTH,
White House, 7 Sandal Rise,
Solithull,
West Midlands,
March 19.

From Mr P. F. Loder Dyer

Sir, Mr Patrick Arnold (March 14) believes that "there is no such thing as a poor widow living in a large house in a middle-class area." He could not be more mistaken. I know of widows who have made much personal sacrifice in order to continue to live in what has always been their home — and why should they leave? Others, more unfortunate, are subject to the diminishing asset of a leasehold home which they cannot sell because of a landlord's obstructive and mercenary policies, or have nothing to sell as statutory tenants, or could be made homeless because they have no statutory protection.

The principles of the community charge have been a godsend to them. The return of a property-based tax will be the final straw. I am sure they would far rather the government concentrated its attentions upon reforming the inequities of leasehold law.

Yours sincerely,
P. F. LODER DYER,
68 Cadogan Place, SW1,
March 14.

From Mr James Forfar

Sir, "Here was a great political storm", writes Matthew Parris of last week's debate on the poll tax (Political sketch, March 14) "over an impost whose cost to the average household is (I calculate) about the same as their milk bill". Mr Parris must construe a precious amount of milk. By my calculation, an "average family" with two poll taxes of £400 would between them have to drink 55 pints of milk a week for their bill to be of similar size.

Yours,
JAMES FORFAR,
27 Enfield Street,
Beeston, Nottingham,
March 14.

From Miss Karen Findlay

Sir, Will the new improved community charge be "tried out" in Scotland first?

Yours faithfully,
KAREN FINDLAY,
Wye College,
Wye, Kent,
March 19.

Green plaudits

From Dr Simon Lyster

Sir, As a professional conservationist, I usually find myself being extremely rude about the government. Like almost all governments it is doing nothing like enough to combat the continuing degradation of our natural environment. But last week was one of the best weeks for nature conservation this country has seen for a long time — thanks to Mr Heseltine.

He started by announcing his intention to revoke planning permission for a part of Cranford Heath in Dorset that Poole Borough Council had decided to cover in houses — and so rescue a wonderful piece of habitat where five of our most endangered reptiles and birds breed.

He then announced much needed proposals to strengthen protection for all sites of special scientific interest throughout England and Wales. Finally, he threw Britain's weight unequivocally behind a proposed EC directive to protect the habitats of threatened species throughout Europe which have been foundering for lack of sufficient political impetus.

Do not relax Mr Heseltine, there is much more to do; but well done for a good start.

Yours faithfully,
SIMON LYSER,
(Senior Conservation Officer),
World Wildlife Fund for Nature,
Panda House,
Weymouth, Dorset,
March 18.

Tales of the impertinent

From Mr Anthony Wilmot

Sir, Your item (Diary, March 18) on whether Roald Dahl would have referred to children as "little bastards" (as claimed by Sir Kingsley Amis) or as "little buggers" (as asserted by Mrs Felicity Dahl)... I asked Roald Dahl, only a few weeks before he died, how he dealt with intrusive telephone calls from children. He said: "I tell them to put their mother on the line. I then tick her off, saying 'It's a frightful impertinence to allow her child to ring up and not write first. Then I tell her 'Well, put the little bugger on again and I'll have a word with him'."

Yours faithfully,
ANTHONY WILMOT,
3 Lansdowne Court,
1 Lansdowne Road,
Wimbledon Common, SW20,
March 19.

Switch on to gas and beat the Budget

With petrol up by about 20p a gallon, cheaper natural gas could soon power vehicles in Britain. Nick Nuttall reports

Natural gas, the fuel used for cooking and heating millions of homes, could soon be powering thousands of cars, lorries, vans and buses throughout Britain.

Around the world, compressed natural gas (CNG) has been gaining ground as a cheap, clean-burning, less environmentally harmful fuel. In Italy alone, an estimated 600,000 vehicles are powered by the gas.

Despite the availability of established technology, and North Sea gas, the fuel's potential in Britain has not been realised. Only a handful of vehicles have been converted to run on CNG.

This, experts believe, is set to change as stricter European Commission emission standards come into force. This week, environment ministers in Brussels agreed that stronger measures should be introduced, to lessen pollution from diesel buses and trucks, mirroring controls already agreed for cars.

Anticipating these moves, British Gas, clearly a key beneficiary if natural gas vehicles become popular in Britain, has been quietly pouring large, but undisclosed,

amounts into CNG research in Britain and Canada.

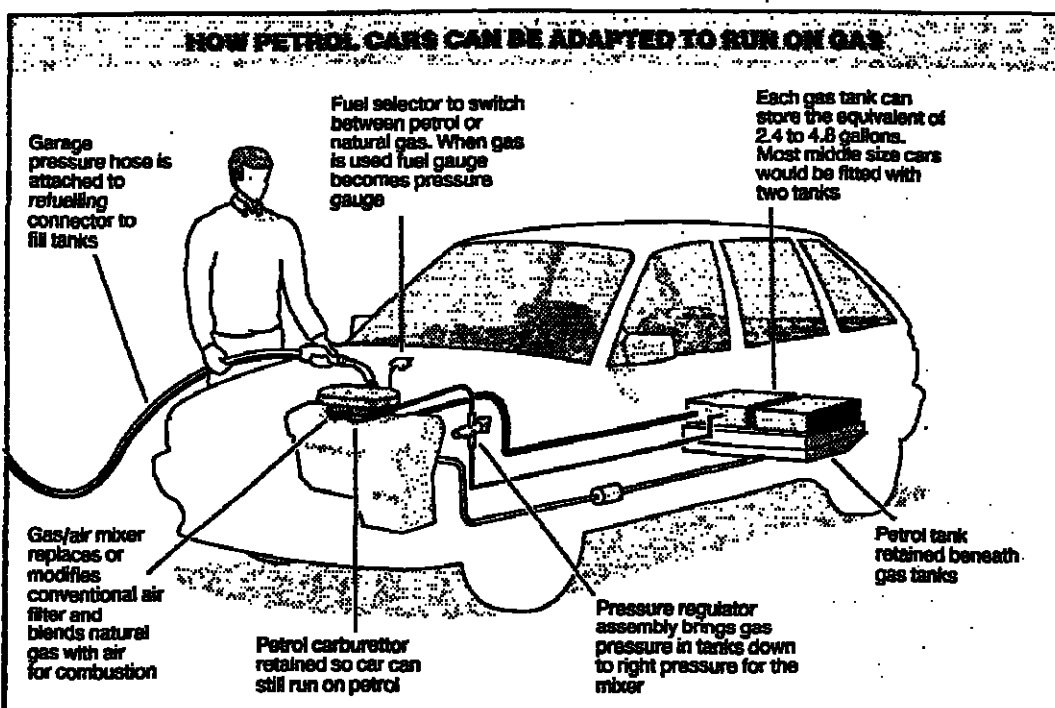
Next month, two Ford Escort vans, a Transit van and a Macstron, which have been converted in The Netherlands, will start field trials in Britain, alongside conventionally powered vehicles. They will use a gas depot in the area of the Old Kent Road, south London, where a CNG filling station has been installed.

Kerth Nelson, the British Gas marketing manager for CNG vehicles, says: "Another vehicle in the West Midlands has been on trial since February."

Enco, a Nottingham-based company that makes kits to convert vehicles to run on either CNG or diesel/petrol, has been piloting a similar scheme in Blackburn, Lancashire, where eight borough council vehicles have been converted to run on CNG.

Ian Ratcliffe, the acting director of operations for the council, says he has been delighted with both the performance and fuel savings. A Sherpa van owned by the council, with three tanks fitted under the floor, has a range of 200 miles.

A pilot project at Preston,



Lancashire, for a scheme to turn landfill rubbish to gas for fuelling vehicles has been earmarked for EC funds. Bill Harrison, the managing director of Enco, says that within a few years, refuse collectors may travel in lorries powered by gas produced by the paper and vegetable waste they collect.

Within a few years, refuse collectors may travel in lorries powered by gas from the vegetable waste they collect

The advantages of CNG over traditional engine fuels are compelling and numerous, advocates say. CNG is abundant and could become an important renewable resource if farmers and waste-management authorities are encouraged to produce the fuel by fermentation of surplus crops and rubbish.

At current prices and levels of taxation, the fuel costs the equivalent of £1.50 a gallon, of which about a third is tax. In countries such as Italy, the government has encouraged use of the fuel by offering tax concessions and grants for the fuel and for conversion kits.

CNG supporters in Britain have been pressing the government for

further tax concessions here to bring the price of the fuel closer to £1.30 for the equivalent of a gallon of petrol.

While not reducing the duty on CNG in the Budget on Tuesday, Norman Lamont, the Chancellor, did raise the differential by increasing the tax on the gas by only 1.65p a litre, compared with 3.3p a litre on petrol, 3.4p on

unleaded and 3.3p on diesel, plus an extra 2.5 per cent VAT next month. Depending on the type of vehicle, nitrogen oxide and carbon monoxide emissions can be nearly three-quarters less, while hydrocarbon emissions are cut by almost a half. Pollution from sulphur and soot-causing particles are virtually nil and there are no lead emissions.

Running costs can also be reduced. Some supporters claim the life expectancy of engines, spark plugs, filters and rings could be doubled. Mr Harrison says there are also important safety advantages over liquid petroleum gas (LPG), a fuel which has a flammable range in air.

Natural gas ignites only at 700C and is lighter than air. If leaks occur, it rises rather than settling in a potentially hazardous puddle. The pressurised fuel tanks needed are required by law to withstand 5,000 lb per sq in.

One problem with CNG is that, until there is a network of filling

stations, vehicles will need kits allowing them to run on either natural gas or conventional fuel. These cost about £750 but, for a fleet operator with 20 vehicles, should be covered by reduced fuel expenses in two or three years.

Another drawback is that if a vehicle does not have electronic fuel injection, there can be a loss of power of about 10 per cent. But by 1993, new rules will mean that virtually all vehicles will be electronically fuel-injected.

British Gas engineers at the company's Newcastle research station are trying to find new ways to store gas on vehicles at lower pressures, studying absorbent materials which could soon allow the gas to be stored in the same sort of tanks as petrol.

Experts in the CNG industry are convinced that, if just one big fleet operator will support the fuel, others will follow and a network of filling stations can be established. They predict that the first operator will be signed up by the autumn.

Bill Harrison, of Enco, fills up a gas-driven van on test

Sobering end for drunken vine louse

Science rescues wine industry from plague

The little creature that wine drinkers dread most is steadily advancing across California, threatening vineyards in the Napa Valley as it once destroyed those of Bordeaux. A new variant of the root louse, phylloxera, is finding the rootstocks used in California vineyards particularly tasty eating.

The irony is that French vineyards devastated by phylloxera in the 19th century rescued themselves only by grafting their vines on to American rootstock. The resistant strain came from the eastern states, and today virtually all European vineyards depend on it. California, however, has used a hybrid between the American and the European varieties, believing it to be immune to phylloxera.

Over the next ten years, 50,000 acres of vines in Sonoma and Napa counties alone are expected to succumb to the scourge of phylloxera. "We have been planting on rootstock we thought was resistant, although the rest of the world kept telling us it wasn't," concedes James Wolpert, a viticulturist at the University of California at Davis.

The phylloxera threat is providing an opportunity for techniques that may be able to produce new resistant rootstock more rapidly. Conventional propagation can provide 100 new cuttings a year, but tissue culture might generate between two and three million according to a small company in Oregon, Agrotech, which is developing the technique.

Once a resistant vine is found, the buds are removed, sterilised, then raised in a growth chamber until they produce shoots. The buds are then removed from the shoots and the process repeated.

Each stage takes only a few weeks, making it possible to generate many identical copies quickly. They can then be planted out, grafted to fruit-bearing shoots, and shipped to stricken vineyards.

Conquering phylloxera in California is not going to be easy, but if it works the technique should make it much quicker than the agonies endured by the wine chateaux of France in the 1860s.

ANGELA LONG

NIGEL HAWKES



Inside the "microflat": the projected pied-à-terre for the businessman or student

A British-designed 'microflat' may be the answer to many housing problems

Home, sweet box

A tiny fully fitted flat which can be mass-produced and stacked to form blocks of accommodation is to go on the housing market later this year. The flatlet is intended primarily as a pied-à-terre for business people who live out of town, but could be simplified for use as accommodation for students, nurses and even to ease the homeless predicament.

The "microflat", the idea of John Prewer, the technical director of Trinity Modular Technology, is a joint project with Ove Arup, the building engineers, and Styling Interna-

tional (SI), a design company based in Leamington, Warwickshire.

The idea is for a box that can be put up quickly and easily, then fitted with accessories moulded into space-efficient slabs. The cuboid measures 20ft by 10ft by 8ft, and has an entry door at one end and a patio door leading to a balcony at the other.

The structure consists of steel panel walls that act as reinforcement for a concrete frame, poured on site. The designers say the method can provide 15 storeys. Trinity specialises in modern units for construction, though the "microflat" is its first complete dwelling. SI usually designs motor car interiors.

A prototype has been built at SI's offices. It has built-in stereo, television and video, a powerful microcomputer, air-conditioning and fully equipped modern kitchen. A daytime work area transforms

into a bedroom at night when a sofa bed folds out and the computer is packed away.

"This is the top-of-the-range version," says Mr Prewer, who says each one should cost about £25,000 wholesale. Less luxurious versions could be made for mass accommodation.

Interest has been strong, coming from Japan, France, Hungary and New Zealand. Production is scheduled to begin in August at two sites, one in the West Midlands and another at Telford, Shropshire.

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Nature of business: Property Development.
Trade description: 23.
Date of appointment of administrative receiver: 14 March 1991.
Name of person appointed: Mr. J. A. Auer.
Address of person appointed: 100, 101 and 102, The Old Kent Road, London SE5 8TE.
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When too much on your plate is still not enough

The people who suffer from a hunger that can never be satisfied may help to solve other obesity and dieting problems. Jeremy Laurance reports

We eat for pleasure and to satisfy our hunger. But what if that hunger could not be satisfied, however much we ate? Philip Storey, of Nottingham, knows what permanent hunger means. He will eat anything — frozen Brussels sprouts, toothpaste, left-overs from rubbish bins. He steals food from the kitchen and squirrels it away to gnaw when he wakes in the night. He once came back from a school camp with the lining of his mouth and stomach burnt by a toxic substance he had found and swallowed.

Other sufferers from his condition — called Prader-Willi syndrome — have been known to eat 4,000 calories in two hours (a day and a half's meals for an average person). Some have eaten wallpaper, bedding, even polish. One died after consuming large quantities of jam and salt.

What makes people eat without stopping? Put another way, what stops people going on eating? If we understood this, we might understand something about the causes of obesity and the difficulty of dieting. For people such as Philip, the answer seems to be that they feel full only when there is, literally, no more room. But for most of us the sense of fullness comes long before, through a complex mechanism of chemical messengers travelling between gut and brain. Investigation of the breakdown of this mechanism in Prader-Willi patients could yield clues to one of the West's great obsessions: the control of eating.

Philip has never felt the sense of satiation that most people have after a full meal. Aged 23, and just 4ft 11in tall, he weighs more than 20 stone. He cannot head, his ankles are swollen, he is breathless, sleeps poorly and can walk only short distances. Yet he is always starving. Instead of dying of too little, he risks death from too much.

Prader and Willi, the syndrome has been familiar in art and literature for centuries. "La Monstrua," by the 17th century artist Juan Carreno de Miranda, in the Prado museum, Madrid, is almost certainly a Prader-Willi. Dr Laurance says. "And there is no better description of the syndrome than Dickens's portrait of the 'fat boy', Joe, in *The Pickwick Papers* who only eats and sleeps."

There is no cure, and the cause is uncertain. About half of Prader-Willi sufferers have a detectable abnormality of chromosome 15 (the rest may also have an abnormality which is, as yet, undetectable). Because they do not develop sexually they cannot have children and pass the defect on. It is believed to occur at or near conception. "The supposition is that there is a gene somewhere on chromosome 15 that affects appetite," says Dr Tony

'As soon as he's finished one meal he wants to know what's for the next. He has never in his life been full'



Always hungry: Philip Storey's obesity stems from Prader-Willi syndrome

Holland, a consultant psychiatrist at the Maudsley hospital, London. "If the gene responsible is identified, it could provide a clue to the causes of obesity in the wider population."

In an experiment at the Maudsley hospital, Dr Holland offered a group of Prader-Willi patients and a group of volunteers as many cottage cheese and cucumber sandwiches as they wanted to eat in an hour. On average, the Prader-Willi patients ate three times as many as the volunteers, yet rated themselves as hungrier afterwards.

But blood tests showed that levels of the hormone, cholecystokinin,

which is important in satiety and is released by the gut, were very high in the Prader-Willi patients. "So that peripheral mechanism in satiety is intact," Dr Holland says. "We now have to ask why the message is not getting to the brain."

The answer will not provide the formula for a "satisfaction" pill. But the next step towards it is likely to be found somewhere on chromosome 15.

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The Prader-Willi Syndrome Association UK may be contacted via the Honorary Secretary, 37 Jasmine Close, Goldsmith Park, Woking, Surrey GU21 3RQ.

MEDICAL BRIEFING Dr Thomas Stuttford

Odd pattern of islands

Although journalists have speculated on the sex life of the islanders of South Ronaldsay, many of whom are recent immigrants, there has been no comment on one unusual feature of the reproductive cycle of the indigenous women of the Scottish islands: they have the menopause later than any other British women. In 1962 Sir Thomas Jeffcoate, then professor of gynaecology at Liverpool, reviewed the age of the menopause and found that although the average in the United Kingdom was 47, the island women usually continued to menstruate until they were between 55 and 60. Professor Jeffcoate attributed this to genetic factors which had helped to maintain the community's survival despite harsh conditions. He noted that elsewhere the age of the menopause was increasing as women enjoyed a higher standard of living, according to the *British Journal of Hospital Medicine*, the av-



Genetic bonus: later menopause for island women

erage age of the menopause is now 51. More than 1 per cent of women have the menopause before the age of 40. As well as increasing the risk of heart disease and osteoporosis, this can be devastating to the child-bearing hopes of those who have married later. Ovum donation is a procedure which should be considered in these cases. An ovum donated by another woman is fertilised by the patient's husband's sperm, and later implanted in her uterus, which has been previously prepared by HRT. London's Lister hospital has the best results in the world, but even so, only 20 per cent of the recipients achieve a successful pregnancy.

Desert service

Dr Charles Goodson-Wickes has returned to Westminster after service in the Gulf, the first MP to see active service for 45 years. At the start of the campaign he found the cold and damp resulted in an epidemic of chest infections, so that at night the huge desert tents sounded like an old-fashioned Victorian ward. Surgical casualties were mainly the result of road accidents, or the accidental discharge of weapons — the modern rifle, however rapid and accurate its fire, has a tendency to go off when least expected. The highway to the front, crammed as it was with trucks being driven by tired soldiers in a hurry, proved to be one of the most dangerous in the world. Later, in the advance into Kuwait, when Dr Goodson-Wickes was doctor to the brigade's headquarters, he saw many more Iraqi than British casualties.

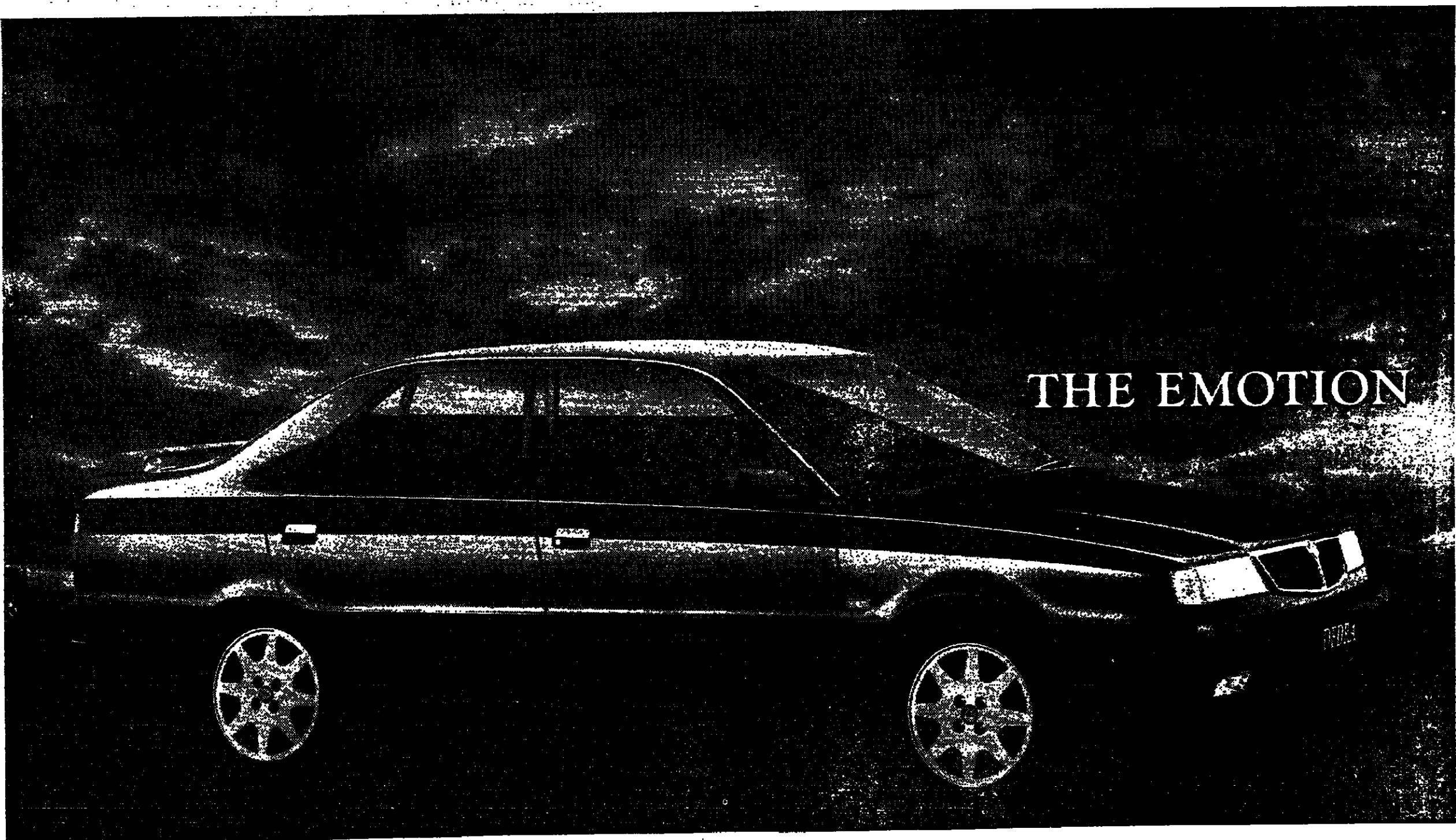


Voice of authority

Sir Gordon Borrie, QC, the director general of the Office of Fair Trading, sympathises with the voice troubles of John Major (above); soon after he was appointed his own voice became increasingly hoarse and weak. Any patient suffering hoarseness for more than a few weeks needs expert advice, and the direct inspection of their vocal cords and larynx. In Sir

Gordon's case the trouble was not caused by laryngitis, nodules, or a malignant tumour, but to a benign papilloma which was removed; 14 years later his voice is as strong as ever.

Upper respiratory tract infections, usually viral, sometimes bacterial, are the most common causes of laryngitis, but it can also be due to the inhalation of irritants, including tobacco and alcohol fumes, or to forcing the voice when tired or tense. The patient's ability to resist infection is important; laryngitis is common in children before they have built up resistance. Later in life stress can undermine this acquired resistance. Dr F.J. Napier, a psychiatrist who worked with bomber crews in the war, noted that the number suffering from respiratory tract infections was proportional to the length of their flight and the resistance they encountered. The prime minister's recent schedule must be the politician's equivalent of facing heavy flak over the Ruhr.



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DEDRA TURBO. THE NEW LANCIA

Life is just a game of poker

Hugh Barnes reviews a parable of the open road and the closed, terrifying worlds waiting out there

You never know what kind of hat Paul Auster will be wearing when he writes a new book. He is a master of disguises, a protean storyteller who resists being identified with a particular genre or range of subject. His six previous novels include a Western of sorts, a science-fiction, a romance, and the so-called New York Trilogy — *City of Glass*, *Ghosts*, and *The Locked Room* — that resembles a structuralist critique of the detective story.

The Music of Chance is puzzling. It could be a parable, a road movie or a poker lesson. It relates the misadventures of a Boston fireman called Jim Nashe, whose wife leaves him just before he unexpectedly inherits two hundred thousand dollars.

The money comes too late, however; the marriage is over. So Nashe buys a swanky car and drives off in search of the exhilarating freedom of America, zooming from one nowhere to the next. At first the spondulicks appear to be inexhaustible, but after six months or so the adventure turns into a paradox. Nashe realises that although loads of money procures freedom, spending it only makes you broke again: "The money kept him going, but it was also an engine of loss, inexorably leading him back to the place where he had begun."

Besides human interest, a novel ought to offer a certain complication — ingenuity of thought and ripeness of expression that surpass what the reader has time for or talent. Auster plays games. He enjoys unpredictable turns of phrase and bizarre events. Sooner or later, he breaks down the reader's defences against uncertainty, and revives the frightening sense of mystery that is blunted by predictable experience and turns of phrase.

Auster poses questions that have no obvious answers: about Nashe's destiny (what is likely and what he imagines it to be). And then the chance comes to buy some extra freedom. Nashe meets a professional poker player called Jackpot. He agrees to stake "Pozzi" for a game with two stooges who have won a lottery, eccentric and increasingly sinister recluses living in a vast estate in Pennsylvania.

The Music of Chance isn't for poker buffs, though in some strange way it's about them. The thrill of reading the novel is at least partly illegitimate: you are startled and disturbed by getting so much pleasure out of such a terrible story, by watching yourself submit so helplessly to the grip of Auster's reverie. The novel

leaves you feeling vaguely spooked in a way that makes you identify with its self-spooked hero.

Auster tends to be showy. Either his sentences are short and clipped or they limp on, making commas do the work of full stops or dashes. The plot zigzags between the possible and the improbable. At the end of the game, after a run of disastrous hunches to back Pozzi when the cards go against him, Nashe discovers that instead of winning more freedom, he has become enslaved. The winners put the losers to work.

Nashe is a frightening man, a quiet monster of inwardness, and his creator understands him scarily well. Auster's prose has — has always had — a quality of demented lyricism, a tendency to flip out. His favourite territory is the realm of indeterminacy, unknowability and half-apprehension.

The settings are reinforced by meticulously observed details, and the action is stunning. But although he insists on citing and reciting physical features — what people look like and what they are wearing — Auster isn't very good at this sort of description. As a result, the characters lack depth.

During the poker game Nashe sees the joint and discovers a scale model which the owner calls the City of the World, adding that it's "more than just a toy. It's an artistic vision of mankind. In one way, it's an autobiography, but in another way it's what you might call utopia — a place where the past and future come together, where good finally triumphs over evil." The same could be said of Auster's fictional world, minus the triumph.

Bluff plays a part in *The Music of Chance*, which often resembles a poker game. The elements of fiction are like the cards in the pack. They are always all there. Towards the end of the novel the stakes are raised. Back on the road, Nashe inexplicably turns up a blind alley, a dead end.

Auster is better at showing than explaining, and in *The Music of Chance* he leaves himself too much to explain. With the different characters, as with the rooms and buildings he likes to describe, Auster is interested in the connotations, but he isn't always able to make clear what they are. The never-ending road is an unbecoming anomaly in the world of patterns and conspiracies, and it gives you a less pleasurable tingle than the glimpses of the City of the World. It's an intimation of the more terrifying world without.



Paul Auster, the master of inwardness and claustrophobia in the country of the unknown

Where the deer and the symbols play

LITTLE Ben Curtis and his big brother Bo have their land sold from under them in Clement County, Texas, and they ride the Chisholm Trail to Abilene. The date is 1871 and the West is opening up. Bo gets drunk, fleeced and murdered in a gambling-den and, for the remaining 300 pages of this "epic novel" Ben has to make out for himself. His career however takes us all into unfrequented territory. But perhaps we should have been alerted by the presence of

Tom Carney, a highly efficient Negro cowhand. In Zane Grey Tom might have been a hero-figure, but in Peter Carter he is harbinging of a new didacticism that has come to subdue the old Wild West.

Ben Curtis on his own, you see, is soon diverted from the expected theme: revenge for his brother's murder. He advances instead into a career of

laissez-faire capitalism. From helping in a store he moves on to shrewder business deals, and when his progress is halted by an early version of the Wall Street crash, he takes to buffalo-

ing from New York City, where he has turned printer,

slaughter on the prairie. The catalogue of these events is recounted to us by Ben himself, looking back in old age and writing from New York City, where he has turned printer,

and has apparently come under heavy influence from *Huckleberry Finn*. That interpretation of events, as told in this all-purpose Dixieland domestic however, is even more firmly determined by Peter Carter, who is one of those contemporary British writers for the young who are attentive to matters of social con-

science. Tom the Negro, the

hounding of Redskins, the massacre of the buffalo are not narrative components so much as focuses for admonition and guilt. And for all the token Westernism of Ben's casual address or the theatricality of his final confrontation, in a blizzard, with his brother's killer, such store-bought conventions sit uneasily beside the symbolic revelation, on the wall of an Abilene homestead, of the whiskey features of Karl Marx.

Black and white of two worlds

CARYL Phillips was born in St Kilda, brought up in Leeds, educated at Oxford and calls his new novel *Cambridge*. Cultural confusion carries over from the life into the book, whose title refers not to the other place but to an African who, after a happy period of Christianisation in Wilberforce's England, fetches up a slave on a Caribbean plantation. He tells his story towards the novel's end, but most of the narrative, which observes the particular iniquities of the pre-obsolescent slave system, is delivered by the daughter of the plantation's absentee owner. For a late-20th-century black male to adopt the voice of an early 19th-century white female is bold indeed. Phillips brings to the task more imaginative energy than accuracy, shooting back about a century too far, so that his Emily sounds less like Austen's Emma than Richardson's Pamela. Almost any sentence bears this out: "Then the wind raised her pipe and a burst of heavenly dew somewhat cooled the air and chased away my feathered favourites."

Phillips makes a much better fist of his sociological research: Emily's documentation of Caribbean customs, taking in food, music, field labour and superstitious rites, appears encyclopaedic. These side-dishes finally offer up more nourishment than the main fare itself, in which Emily discovers a nice side to the uncouth plantation manager, then rediscovers the nasty side, to her cost as well as to Cambridge's.

When Dubravka Ugresic's frenetically entertaining *Fording the Stream of Consciousness* won a clutch of awards in Yugoslavia in 1988, one can only assume the judges were not novelists. Ugresic treats members of her own profession with riotous irreverence. The plot is a baggy negligible affair, telling of the various sexual-political scrapes Ugresic's international cast of scribes hunt themselves into at a conference in the author's native

Zagreb. There is little talk of literary theory and practice; back home they may be typewriting lonely hearts, but cooped up together these novelists wear their fundamental flaws on their sleeves, plotting, main-chancing, boasting and bemoaning. "There is no difference between a writer, a cyclist and a sociologist," Ugresic enigmatically remarks at one point. "Not from a waiter's perspective at least." So cyclists are no good at holding their booze either? Advice for readers who prefer to keep writers on pedestals: avoid this case study.

Ugresic's succinct, sceptical findings are rather long-windedly backed up by T. Coraghessan Boyle, whose *East is East* is based half in a writers' colony and half in a swamp. When a Japanese illegal immigrant is washed ashore in Georgia, he finds the one environment no more nor less hazardous than the other. Boyle's Mishima-obsessed hero, called Hiro, from which one makes a

fair deduction early on that the novel's intellectual ambitions do not run deep. It is an energetically American book, not as keen, despite the suggestion in its title, on delving into the trans-oceanic cultural clash as are other books reviewed here, but more comfortable dabbling in light comedy and firing off brisk narrative.

Damage, the debut of Josephine Hart, has many of the sensationalist ingredients of the airport-boiler: successful doctor and politician with ravishing wife, son and daughter falls obsessively and destructively in love with dark, dangerous, otherworldly future daughter-in-law. The novel is cleverer than those bare bones advertise, but one begs to suggest, as clever as it thinks it is. Narrated with sparse, understated passion, the story strives for that heavy-weight meaningfulness that trademarks it as school of Murdoch. Indeed its jacket emblazons a generous plug from Dame Iris herself, which is more of a recommendation to some than to others.

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JAZZ

Why melody takes the rap



The voice of the Nineties? Cassandra Wilson (above) talks to Clive Davis

Strange word, jazz. Everybody knows what it means, and most are aware that it originally had something to do with sex and brothels. Yet it is hard to find two people who agree on an exact definition.

There is a similar problem with vocalists. Where do you draw the line between, say, Mel Tormé and Frank Sinatra, or between Dinah Washington and Nina Simone? Some fundamentalists will even maintain that Ella Fitzgerald stopped being a jazz performer when she began recording her famous "song-book" albums in the Fifties. "A jazz singer," he noted recently, "simply makes whatever he or she sings swing. Ethel Merman was not a jazz singer; Doris Day is."

Most of the time this dithering over categories is of interest only to critics: everybody else is happy to sit back and enjoy the music. But with Cassandra Wilson, the problem remains. Faced in some quarters as "the voice of the Nineties," Wilson is uneasy about the "jazz" label. She thinks the word is out-moded, though she admits, it is not easy to find a satisfactory alternative. Her own preference, "African-American contemporary music," hardly rolls off the tongue.

Her aim, however, is clear enough: to win over black listeners who, she says, gave up on jazz decades ago. "You can see it in the audiences," she says. "You'll be hard-pressed to find black people who go to listen. They feel alienated. The music has crossed an invisible boundary into another world. If we keep it locked in an ivory tower and in concert halls, we're doomed continually to repeat clichés instead of reaching out to 15-, 16-, 17-year-olds who listen to hip-hop."

A Southerner in her mid-thirties, Wilson moved to New York a decade ago. In her early days she was a more or less conventional singer, influenced by the usual names: Benny Carter, Abbey Lincoln and so on.

The turning point came when she joined forces with the so-called "M-Base" collective. Formed by some of the

sharpest of New York's younger musicians, the collective specialises in funk-based compositions which owe as much to rap as to jazz. Turning their backs on the neo-classicism of the Marsalis set, M-Base members such as the saxophonist Steve Coleman want to capture the spirit and chaos of modern New York.

They certainly take their mission seriously. Coleman's last album, *Rhythm People* (on which Wilson made a guest appearance), came with the immodest sub-title, "The Resurrection of Creative Black Civilisation".

People seldom have neutral opinions about the M-Base formula. Those who like it have a tendency to lapse into hyperbole: "21st century bebop" was one description recently voiced by a disc jockey on Jazz FM.

The unconvinced majority usually come away muttering about the dense, clattering rhythms and the determinedly unconventional harmonies. Wilson's delivery makes nonsense of the rules of pitch and time-keeping.

Eventually, it probably comes down to whether or not you like rap music. If you feel it is the most boring sound ever inflicted on the human ear, you are unlikely to relish the M-Base approach. If, alternatively, you feel it is a liberating form of self-expression, Wilson's work will seem like the next step in the evolutionary process.

She recalls that she fell in love with rap the moment she heard the band Public Enemy. She has no patience with the familiar complaint that the style lacks melodic variation.

"Melody is much exaggerated," she says. "Rhythm, to me, is the basis of everything: that's where we come from. There is a truly sophisticated rhythmic sense in hip-hop that people perhaps don't quite hear off the top of their heads. I love the lyrics, the way of dealing with language. It's revolutionary. If you listen closely, there are some very interesting things harmonically too."

Cassandra Wilson appears at the *Town and Country Club*, Highgate Road, Kentish Town, London NW5 (071-284 0303) on Sunday

CINEMA: NEW RELEASES

We are awful, but he likes us

Geoff Brown on Mike Leigh's *Life is Sweet*, Michael Palin in *American Friends*, Ju Dou, *Jetsons* — *The Movie* and *Look Who's Talking Too*

In *Life is Sweet* (15, Lumière, Gate Notting Hill) Wendy, bustling North London mother of two, faces the world with a sunshine smile as she dusts the poodle ornaments. Andy, her lolling husband, dreams of making a mint with a dilapidated match-bar caravan purchased in one of many weak moments. Their twin daughters resemble chalk and cheese: Natalie, a plumber, is relaxed, well-ordered, but the anorexic Nicola spends her days in scowls and insults. "Pass the sick bucket!" Nicola shrieks. "Fascist! Tory! Boring git!" Ah yes, life is sweet.

This could only be a film by Mike Leigh, comic maestro of television, theatre and, increasingly, film. Building on his renewed cinema popularity after *High Hopes* in 1988, Leigh parades a new array of social types with his customary trademark of boisterous caricature. But where *High Hopes* found its comedy in culture clashes between factions of Thatcher's Britain — the nouveau riche, the upwardly mobile, the embattled working-class socialists — *Life is Sweet* looks beyond class divisions to the joys and woes of a suburban family.

For the most part, it is an exhilarating romp. Leigh's ear for the comic details of mundane dialogue makes scenes he can even make the phrase "waterproof grot" appear funny. Alison Steadman, Leigh's wife, brings Wendy marvelously to life, barrelling through domestic ups and downs with a sly quip and a chuckle. Jim Broadbent is droll as her procrastinating husband, idly contemplating do-it-yourself projects, beer can in hand; among the youngsters, Claire Skinner shines as the poised, no-nonsense Natalie.

But this is not just *Carry On Suburbia*. Every so often Leigh yanks off the jester's cap and bells for tender moments: a brief shot, for instance, of Natalie worriedly listening to her sister's vomiting, or a tearful set-to between Wendy and Nicola, who learns that she came close to death after a brush with anorexia four years before. These may be bright,

capering cartoon figures; they are also, on occasion, real people.

American Friends (PG, Odéon Haymarket) hails from another British funnyman, Michael Palin, though this attractive if languorous romance, inspired by the diaries of Palin's great-grandfather, keeps its jokes swathed in extreme refinement. Palin stars as Francis Ashby — like Palin's ancestor an Oxford don of daunting rectitude, whose tidy, celibate 19th-century life gradually crumbles when he succumbs to the charms of two American women encountered on holiday in Switzerland. Days before Ashby's expected election to the post of college president, the ladies — a worthy, cultured soul (Connie Booth) and her 18-year-old ward (Trini Alvarado) — arrive on his doorstep. Oxford rebounds with rumour and consternation.

The period setting is crucial to Palin's story: without a sharp sense of social decorum

and rituals, how can we properly gauge the melting of Ashby's heart? Yet once the door marked "Victorian Atmosphere" is opened, it is very difficult for any British director to close it — least of all Tristram Powell, maker of many a tasteful dramatised documentary for the BBC. Here are dreaming spires and gliding boats, parasols, luggage, glasses of port, the clutched Baedeker in Alpine vistas — all doused in persistent music by the sweet-toothed Georges Delerue. Under the weight of this Victoriana, the slender story sometimes slows to a halt and buckles; while Palin himself, bereft of his impish *Monty Python* twinkle, proves insufficiently robust an actor to cut through the blanket of refinement. Yet the film survives, just about, on good taste and charm. Trini Alvarado is properly bewitching as Ashby's young American flame; while Britain's army of character actors chip in with an enjoyable carnival of Oxford types, from Alfred Molina's sly college rogue through



Tearful over anorexia: Jane Horrocks as Nicola, left, and Alison Steadman as her mother Wendy in *Life is Sweet*

to Bryan Pringle's punctilious manservant. Any Chinese film that breaks through conservative American taste to win an Oscar nomination must be remarkable indeed. *Ju Dou* (15, ICA Cinema) — one of five nominated this year in the foreign-language film category — fully lives up to expectations. The director, Zhang Yimou, pursues the same forthright style that made his first feature, *Red Sorghum*, so

overwhelming. Once again, an imaginary story (about lust, revenge and family honour) carries the resonance of a folktale; once again, colour photography is used constructively to build the narrative, not decorate odd corners. Action rests mostly within a complex set representing a dye factory in a remote country town during the 1920s. Cloths of many colours hang from poles thrusting into the sky; the floor is criss-crossed by tanks of dye. Dwarfed by their surroundings, three people — the despotic owner, his abused wife Ju Dou, and adopted nephew — play out fate's cruel game. Ju Dou (the name literally means "chrysanthemum bean") finds sexual satisfaction with the nephew, when she bears a son, the owner — by now half-paralysed — contrives to use him as an instrument of revenge. But nobody emerges from this plot smiling: for Zhang Yimou, human feelings are constantly thwarted by the treadmill of destiny. Zhang's grandiose style can topple over into the obvious; when wife and lover first enjoy intercourse, bolts of cloth partly unravel in sympathy. Yet the slow dissolves, filtered lighting and bold compositions mostly grip us. So do the actors — headed by Gong Li, Zhang's customary heroine, as the lustful, luckless wife. *Ju Dou* demonstrates a tremendous talent at work.

Finally, two forgettable follies from America. The animated *Jetsons* — *The Movie* (U, Cannon Oxford Street) makes a miserably botched job of re-vamping William Hanna and Joe Barbera's television cartoon series, a mild Space Age satire about a futuristic family first seen in America in 1962. This was never a show for the cartoon connoisseur; the film, supervised by Hanna and Barbera themselves, sticks close to the original's mundane style, aside from an unwise dip into the Pop Art kitsch of *Yellow Submarine*.

The freak success of the uncouth, unfunny *Look Who's Talking* remains one of life's smaller mysteries. The inevitable sequel, *Look Who's Talking Too* (12, Odéon West End), written and directed, as before, by Amy Heckerling, shines no light on the matter. Mike, the baby prone to adult thoughts (voiced by Bruce Willis), is now a toddler, with a baby sister voiced by Roseanne Barr. The disorganised plot involves parental bickering between Kirstie Alley and John Travolta. In the Fifties, Hollywood made seven silly films about Francis the talking mule; let us hope these talking tots are quickly nipped in the bud.

'These may be capering cartoon figures; they are also, on occasion, real people'

BRIEFING

Tombs of glory

THE National Art Collections Fund has just announced this year's shortlist for its 1991 awards, worth a total of £25,000. Among those favoured to win one of the five £5,000 prizes is Harriet Frazer, for her "Memorials by Artists", a scheme which arranges commissions with letter-cutters and artists to produce original tombstones or memorials, instead of the standard, production-line monuments. Frazer's scheme was inspired by her search to find a suitable memorial for her 26-year-old daughter, who died in 1985. Among the other contenders for an award are Lesley Greene for the Public Art Development Trust; the Tate Gallery for its rehang; the National Museum of Wales for its refurbished galleries; and the Scottish National Gallery's Cézanne and Poussin exhibition.

Last chance... AS WELL as consolidating his position as a top-selling act, George Michael's *Listen Without Prejudice Vol 1* was the Best Album of 1990 at last month's Brit Awards. However, the swarthy superstar's current show, which finishes its run at Wembley Arena (081-900 1234) tomorrow and Saturday, comprises unrecorded cover versions of his favourite songs.

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BBC 1

RADIO 3

<p>6.35-6.55am Open Open University (FM only)</p> <p>6.55 Weather; News Headlines</p> <p>7.00-7.10 Concert: Götterdämmerung (The Union, Concert Paraphrase on National Air, Op 47: Vienna State Opera Orchestra under Peter Eisdorff, with Eugene List, piano); Hummel (Trumpet Concerto: Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields, London; Neville Martinson, with Hilson Handbergberger)</p> <p>7.30 News</p> <p>7.35 Evening Concert (cont): Smetana (Pochyly and Polka in D: Czech PO under Neumann); Brahms (Sonata in G minor Op 120 No 2: The King, Concerto Daniel Barenboim, piano); Vivaldi (Symphony in F: Ulmas Sinfonietta under Julia Piatigorsky); Schubert (Impromptu in F minor, D 895 No 1: Andreas Schiff, piano)</p> <p>8.30 News</p> <p>8.35 Masters of the Week: Ottavino Respighi (Ancient Airs and Dances, Suite No 3; Three Botticelli Pictures; The Birds)</p> <p>8.45 Beethoven and Darius: Darius, and Beethoven (Over the Hills and Far Away; RPO under Becham); Delius (Gaelic Suite, La Mer et autres); The King's Consort; Baroque, baritone, David Willson, piano; Sibelius (Tone poem, The Oceanides; RPO under Becham); Darius (Violin Concerto No 2: Yehudi Menuhin; Eric Scarth, piano)</p> <p>9.25 BBC Scottish SO under Andrew Lloyd, with Augustin Dumay, violin, performs Beethoven (Hungarian Violin); Bartok-Salkics (Violin Concerto No 3); Tchaikovsky (Symphony No 4)</p> <p>10.05 News</p> <p>10.15 BBC Linnchtime Concert: Live from St George's, Bristol. Accademia Wlnd Quartet of Prague performs Darius (Wed. Concert in B flat, Op 11); Mozart (Divertimento in B flat K 270); Bart (Three pieces brèves), Kvach (Quintette 1894)</p> <p>10.30 Glenn Gould - Concert Dropout: Jeremy Seppman reviews the subsequent work of the Canadian pianist, who retired from the concert platform in 1954 (r)</p>	<p>2.45 Béatrice: L'Enchoir Choir; Montpellier PO under Jan Latham-Koenig performs Alberto Magrassi's opera in three acts. With Françoise Pollet, soprano, as Béatrice; René Masson, baritone, as the A.P. Courais, base, as Mucien</p> <p>5.15 Stravinsky (Scherzo Fantastique) under Kenton Southern under Charles Dutoit</p> <p>5.30 Mahly for Pleasure, with Michael Berkeley</p> <p>7.00 News</p> <p>7.05 Third Act: The Italian composer Luciano Berlio teats to Natalie Wilson</p> <p>7.30 Stravinsky SO under Kees Bakels, with Peter Rigo, cello, performs Dvorak (Scherzo capriccioso); Gericé Struvenum (Cello Concerto The Gardens of Exile - first broadcast); 5.15 Beethoven - A Lack of Independence (r); 5.15 Beethoven (Symphony No 3 in C minor, Organ Symphony: Christopher Dawie, organ)</p> <p>9.30 Bringing the Wood to Life to the BBC: A chess player to a London church in 1973 changed the life of a young New Yorker. David Estery saw wood carvings by his friend, the carvers, went out and bought a few chests and a block of timewood and began carving. So by 1985, when the Scottish carvings at Hampton Court were damaged by fire, he was one of the few experts in a small field able to tackle the restoration. It is time-consuming and labour-intensive work and most carvers, regard it, he says as a short cut to starvation. Contemporary carvers of Glenborrow are also featured</p> <p>9.55 Music in Our Time: Peter Paul Nash presents the second of two programmes on music by the Donsford. Flag (Ensemble 2224 under Paul Mieland); Spin (Newsw Ensemble under Paul Mieland); Spin (VIA Rai) Turin SO under José Ramon Fernandez</p> <p>10.45 Beethoven (Piano Sonata No 9 in E, Op 14 No 1 Claudio Abbado)</p> <p>11.00 Benny's Boys: The Benny Goodman Sextet (r)</p> <p>11.30 News</p> <p>11.35 1556am Composers of the Week: Bach (r)</p> <p>1.00-2.25 Night School (FM only) (except in Scotland)</p>
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BBC 2

RADIO 4

<p>Steno on FM 5.55am Spring Forecast 6.00 6.00 News 6.10 Weather 6.10 Farming Today 6.25 Prayer for the Day 6.30 Today at 6.30, 7.00 7.00 News 8.00, 8.30 News 8.55, 7.55 Weather 8.58 Weather 9.00 News 9.05 Susan Mearns helps listeners to working on a variety of issues 9.45 Letter from . . . Russia: Richard Kendall examines the ethnic make-up of the Russian Federation, and contemplates how long it would survive if the Soviet Union begins to break up 10.02 News: The Natural History Programme: Falgun Kowling and Jewelini Holm report on the struggle to save Europe's rarest goats 10.45 An Act of Worship (a) 10.50 Citizens (a) 11.00 Conversation Piece: Sue MacGregor talks to Lorel Lee, chairman of the Chinese Education, Culture and Community Centre in Manchester's Chinatown 11.50 First Person: Media Cize, George Barber examines the impact of the Council of Ministers 12.00 News: You and Yours, with Debbie Thrower 12.50pm The Secret Life of Richard Attenborough, Miss Willow and the One-Eyed Gentleman, written by Stephen Sherman (4 of 6) (a), 1.15.25 Weather 1.30 The World at One, with James Naughtie 1.40 The Archers (r) 1.55 Shipping Forecast 2.00 News: Women's Hour: Sara Parnham meets leaders who have taken on the role of a single parent: Mercedes Bernstein, author of <i>Body and Soul</i>, and a woman about to run away: and there is advice on redundancy 2.00-4.00 Prime Minister's Questions (PM on radio) 4.00 Conversation Piece (LW only): In Sue Aubrey's play, romance blossoms between Jane (Colin Morgan) a young married teacher and Emma (Kathryn Hunter) a visiting agricultural student</p>	<p>4.05 News: Bookshelf: Nigel Forde talks to Susan Hill about her novel, <i>Air War Angels</i>, an Edwardian love affair set in Cambridge; and looks at a new edition of dictionaries 4.30 Kaleidoscope: The actor Sir Ian McKellen talks to Paul Allen about his knighthood, his theatre career and the support for gay rights (a) 5.00 PM, with Frank Patteridge and Hugh Sykes on Shipping Forecast 5.55 PM 6.00 Six O'Clock News: Financial Report 6.30 The Test Match: From the Westhamptstead Cricket Club, Hertfordshire, Brian Johnston uncovers another test of wit and general knowledge. With Tim Rice, Willie Rushion, Rachel Heyhoe-Fleet and Leslie Thomas (b) (r) 7.00 News 7.05 The Archers 7.20 Soundtrack: Last of the Great Landscapes: After 42 years behind the public bar, Winnie Scott calls time on her life forward to her retirement (a) 8.00 Analysis: From Clogs to Clogs? The first of three documentaries examining Britain's economic decline since 1870 8.45 Does He Talk Sugar? Kati Whitham presents the magazine for disabled listeners 9.15 Kaleidoscope (a) (broadcast at 1.30pm) 9.45 The Financial World Tonight (a) 9.58 Weather 10.00 The World Tonight, with Richard Kavanagh (a) 10.58 News: A statement on behalf of the Liberal Democrats by Alan Beth, MP, spokesman on treasury and economic affairs 10.58 A Book at a Book: Brother of the More Famous Jack, by Barbara Tizard, Read by Cheryl Kennedy (3 of 11) 11.00 Sunday Song: The Ancient of Days. The fourth of a seven-part exploration of middle age by Ian Stevenson (a) 11.30 News 12.00-12.30pm News, and 12.30 Weather 12.33 Shipping Forecast</p>
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FREQUENCIES: Radio 1: 105.3kHz/225m; 105.9kHz/277m; 106.4kHz/97.630.9 Radio
 2: 100.9kHz/303.9kHz/330m; 104.9kHz/212.2. Radio 3: 121.6mhz/277m; FM-80.4
 4: 143.0kHz/1715m; FM-92.4+94.5. Radio 5: 69.3mhz/433m;
 100.0kHz/330m; LBC: 1152.5kHz/267m; FM 97.3. Capital: 156.9kHz/194m; FM
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● BUSINESS AND FINANCE 27-34
● LAW 36
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BUSINESS

THURSDAY MARCH 21 1991

Business Editor
John Bell

Ulster power stations to be sold

NORTHERN Ireland Electricity, the province's government-owned power generation, distribution and retail network, is to be broken up and privatised next year, Peter Brooke, the Northern Ireland secretary, has announced.

He tabled a consultative white paper in parliament yesterday, in which the break-up and sale of the network is proposed on lines similar to those followed in the privatisation of the industry in England and Wales. NIE's four power stations will be sold to two or more bidders.

The plans ran into immediate political trouble. Kevin McNamara, shadow Northern Ireland secretary, made clear that a Labour government would stop the sale of the industry. He accused the government of increasing prices recently to "fatten up" the industry prior to the sale.

Roy Bees, Ulster Unionist MP for Antrim East, said the industry and consumers were being "crucified".

Mr Brooke rejected allegations that his proposals did not have the backing of the government's advisers and board of NIE, adding that the industry would not fall into the hands of the republic.

Pay cut for ICI chief

Sir Denis Henderson, chairman of ICI, has taken a 13 per cent pay cut after the 36 per cent fall in pre-tax profits last year to £977 million.

The report and accounts reveal the chairman's pay slipped from £514,000 to £448,000 in 1990. Other directors also had their salaries scaled back.

Comment, page 29

Willis up 33%

Willis Corroon, the insurance broking group, increased pre-tax profits 33 per cent to £81.7 million last year. The profit included a £6.3 million contribution from Corroon & Black, the American retail broker, which merged with Willis Faber in October. Earnings per share rose 19 per cent to 19p. The dividend for the year is 13.2p, up 10 per cent.

Tempus, page 29

US dollar	1.7783 (+0.0098)
German mark	2.9306 (+0.0068)
Exchange index	92.2 (+0.2)

FT 30 Share	1937.7 (-9.4)
FT-SE 100	2441.2 (-17.8)

New York Dow Jones	2863.12 (-4.70)
Tokyo Nikkei Ave	2649.35 (-557.31)

RUSSE	
Alstom	237 1/2p (+14p)
Alstom	152 1/2p (+4p)
FALLS	
IM	252 1/2p (-8p)
SG Warburg	452 1/2p (-17p)
Whitbread 'A'	44 1/2p (-10p)
Whitbread 'B'	49 1/2p (-14p)
Yates Group	224p (-11p)
SA Group	32 1/2p (-12p)
Highland Dist	78 1/2p (-21p)
Greenland Whitley	33 1/2p (-8p)
Wiggins	44 1/2p (-12p)
Wiggins	63p (-15p)
RAC Group	68p (-18p)
A McAlpine	308 1/2p (-9p)
Higgs & Hill	385p (-10p)
Cashin	213 1/2p (-9p)
Heathrow	22 1/2p (-12p)
Fluore	45 1/2p (-10p)
Reiters	87 1/2p (-8p)
Kingfisher	45 1/2p (-13p)

Closing Prices...Page 31

London: Bank Base: 13%
3-month interbank 12 1/2%
3-month eligible bills 11 1/2-11 3/4%
US: Prime Rate 9 1/4%
Federal Funds 8 1/4%
3-month Treasury Bills 5.89-5.97%
30-year bonds 9 1/4-9 1/2%

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Shares fall as City hopes of rate cut fade

By GEORGE SIVELL AND COLIN NARBROUGH

THE City gave a muted response to Norman Lamont's first Budget yesterday, marking share prices down in disappointment at the Chancellor's failure to cut interest rates.

Hopes of a one point cut faded and money market dealers are instead seeking a half point cut in the next few days, with a further half point cut to 12 per cent in April.

The three-month interbank rate, a guide to base rates, closed 1/4th firmer at 12 1/4-3/4.

Best hopes are for a half point cut tomorrow, when inflation figures are due. Economists expect the latest annual rise in the retail price index to slip from 9 per cent last month to 8.7 or 8.8 per cent this month.

Fading hopes over base rate cuts were in keeping with the tone of neutral comment on the Budget from the City, and left the FT-SE 100 index 17.8 points lower at 2,441.2 by the close.

Imposition of an extra 2.5 per cent on VAT to compensate for cuts in the poll tax prompted widespread falls in the shares of stores. Breweries suffered from the rise in excise duty and consequential VAT, while motor dealers were affected by the increase in tax on company cars.

British Telecom was hit by comment about government plans to sell the remaining 48.1 per cent stake in the group to help fund a growing public sector deficit.

The pound fared well within the exchange-rate mechanism, leaving the French franc firmly on the floor, as the peseta continued to press its ceiling.

The pound strengthened 0.2 on its trade-weighted index to close at 92.2. Against the mark, the pound rose 0.57 pence to DM2.93.

The dollar enjoyed a quieter day after heavy intervention earlier this week. The American currency fell against the mark to close at DM1.6430, against DM1.6508.

Markets and economists were not helped in their analysis of United Kingdom policy by an interview with John Major, the economic secretary, who described the possibility of a base rate cut as "unlikely" on Channel 4's *Business Daily*, clearly over-

Labour will attack training incentives

By OUR INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

LABOUR party leaders are today expected to attack the government's moves on training and employment that were contained in the Budget.

Tony Blair, shadow employment secretary, is likely to criticise the measures for doing little for the 2 million unemployed, and is expected to argue that tax reliefs on training announced in the Budget are insubstantial.

The training tax allowances, however, were widely welcomed by business leaders, including the Confederation of British Industry.

The scheme is a significant boost to the government's programme of National Vocational Qualifications, a national framework based on employer-defined standards, which is being progressively introduced and is required to be available to 80 per cent of the workforce by the end of next year. Basic tax rate relief will be given for training leading to NVQs and their Scottish equivalent up to Level 4 - broadly, supervisory and management skills.

The cost of the relief will be about £20 million in 1992-3, rising to £40 million when NVQs are fully developed.

Some 30,000 people may be attracted to paying for their own training, in addition to the 250,000 estimated by the Inland Revenue as now meeting all or part of their training costs on schemes for which there will be NVQs.

Money data raise hopes for interest rate cut

By OUR ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

OFFICIAL money supply figures for February strengthened the case for an immediate cut in interest rates, despite a jump in bank and building society lending.

The Bank of England figures showed bank lending up £5.9 billion, almost double the increase seen in January, and well above the £4.2 billion expected by the City.

Analysts were sceptical, however, about the lending data. Many economists considered the February surge an aberration. Instead, they focused on other elements of the data, which did little to alter the picture of sharp slowdown.

The lending included up to £1.3 billion of gross new lending for takeovers, which has little significance for the strength of the economy. Excluding takeover money, lending was close to market expectations.

M0, the officially targeted money supply measure, showed a further slowdown, dropping to an annual growth rate of 2.6 per cent in February from 3.5 per cent in January.

The continued deceleration in the narrow money measure, and the rapid slowdown in broader money, provided an "unambiguous case" for interest rate cuts, Gerard Lyons, chief economist at DKB International, said.

Annual growth in the broad money measure, M4, slowed to 10.8 per cent in February, from 11.2 per cent in January, despite the increase in its bank lending component. This shows that banks are tightening lending and that companies continue to retrench during the recession. Separate

Crossing swords with the MMC

When a close shave is unwelcome

By GILLIAN BOWDITCH

WHEN it comes to wet shaving in Britain, Gillette of America liked the market so much, it bought a monopoly. Or at least, a 22 per cent stake in Wilkinson Sword, its main rival in Britain.

That was until yesterday, when Peter Lilley, the trade secretary, intervened by accepting the findings of a Monopolies and Mergers Commission report that the relationship between Gillette and Wilkinson Sword could be expected to operate against the public interest.

Mr Lilley has asked Sir Gordon Borrie, director general of fair trading, to ensure that the relationship between the two companies in Britain is unravelled.

The nation's shavers will have to wait for a little while longer before discovering whether the relationship stops short of a true monopoly. Mr Lilley already has the findings of a separate, wider



New incarnation: Simon Neal, a BT engineer, polishes the new corporate logo

BT reveals revamp costing £60m

By PHILIP BASSETT

BRITISH Telecom has unveiled key aspects of its new industrial strategy and restructuring that will help position the company for the government's sale of part of its 48.1 per cent stake, expected this autumn.

BT, as the company will now formally be known, unveiled its new logo, colour scheme, advertising campaign, customer services and corporate restructuring, part of a £60 million relaunch.

Iain Vallance, BT's chairman, said the fact the move came the day after the sale of the government's holding was announced in the Budget was purely coincidental.

The company said it was repainting its entire vehicle fleet and telephone boxes, issuing new customer-friendly uniforms for its staff, bringing in a new logo, and changing its name to BT. Everyone called British Telecom BT, Mr Vallance said, so BT would now start calling itself that too.

He was speaking to journalists through a radio mike while seated on a silver-plated platform in a specially constructed auditorium perched halfway up the central atrium at BT's London headquarters.

The old T-shaped logo is also to go, meanwhile, to be replaced by a leaping Pan-style figure that BT says is "a symbol embodying two-way communication".

A sale of the government's share in BT, worth about £10 billion, Mr Vallance said, is expected in September or October. BT said its new advertising campaign, which focuses heavily on improved customer services, would be launched nationally at about that time, after a trial pilot in the Northwest in June.

Profits increase at Reckitt & Colman

By MARTIN WALLER

RECKITT & Colman, the food, health and household products group, saw pre-tax profits rise from £217.4 million to £235.2 million last year despite a negligible contribution, after all financing costs and overheads, from its acquisition of Boyle-Midway, the American household products group.

A final dividend of 21.75p makes a 34p total, an increase from 29.75p. There is a planned five-for-two share split. Despite the issue of £200 million of convertible capital bonds, net borrowings rose from £19.6 million to £357.8 million, or 55 per cent of shareholders' funds, during the year because of the acquisition. Sir Michael Colman, the chairman, said: "We certainly feel we're well on our way to reduce our debt down again to what we regard as rather more normal."

Integration of Boyle-Midway should be complete by the end of this year, and it should be contributing fully by next year.

John St Lawrence, the chief executive, said: "At the moment we're concentrating on managing Boyle-Midway. Acquisitions are unlikely to be our major preoccupation during the course of 1991."

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Merger slump lowers profit at Schroders

By NEIL BENNETT, BANKING CORRESPONDENT

THE world slump in mergers and acquisitions depressed net profits at Schroders, the merchant bank, by 32 per cent to £31.6 million last year.

The firm also suffered a loss in its international securities business and was forced to write off £7 million after the House of Lords declared in February that all interest-rate swaps with local authorities were unlawful. Despite the fall, the bank is paying a final dividend of 10p, to make 14p for the year, up 12 per cent.

Schroders is one of the few British banks to achieve a write-back of bad debt provisions. Other banks have had their profits depressed by heavy write-offs, but Schroders' figures were boosted by £1 million from the release of earlier provisions.

The firm was forced to write off several commercial bad debts in its £1 billion loan book. These were compensated for by a release of provisions after the sale of the Third World debt portfolio.

Alison Deuchars, an analyst at Smith New Court, said: "Under the circumstances, they had a pretty good year. They should be well placed to take advantage when better times return."

George Mallinckrodt, the

chairman, said Schroders' corporate finance business performed strongly despite the recession. The bank advised on 170 transactions worth \$48 billion (+150 transactions worth \$42 billion). These included Rank's bid for Mecca Leisure and the Time Warner merger in America. There was, however, a fall in the number of large and hostile deals, which earn higher fees than agreed offers.

The investment management division suffered a fall in profits. Funds under management fell slightly to £21 billion. The fall was cushioned by an inflow of an estimated £2 billion from 100 new institutional clients.

Wertheim Schroder, the bank's American subsidiary, suffered the heaviest loss on securities. The bank has closed down its American government securities trading after continuing losses. The losses in America were compensated for by a profit in the Tokyo securities subsidiary.

Project finance made a record profit. It advised on funding for several projects won by UK contractors, including a £250 million power generation system in Hong Kong and a £70 million power station in Malaysia.

Attwoods jumps 44%

By MARTIN BARROW



American boom: Ken Foreman of Attwoods

ATTWOODS, the waste disposal company, increased pre-tax profits by 44 per cent to £16.4 million during the six months to the end of January.

Earnings rose 5 per cent to 5.33p a share despite a 20 per cent decline in the value of the dollar against the pound. The company earns 70 per cent of profits in America and in dollar terms increased earnings by 25 per cent. The interim dividend rises 8 per cent to 1.75p a share.

Turnover of £129.33 million was up 23 per cent. Ken Foreman, the chairman, said that all the American businesses produced record profits, with negative effects of the recession being offset by new contracts for waste recycling.

Minds, the Atlanta reproprocessor acquired in late 1989 for \$65 million, had a good first half despite weak metal prices.

However, Mr Foreman said plans to float Minds as a separate quoted company had been abandoned.

Tibbett & Britten rises 29%

By JONATHAN PRYNN

A CONTINUED trend among British and international companies towards contracting out distribution has helped Tibbett & Britten, the supply services group, to a 29 per cent advance in pre-tax profits to £11.7 million for the year to end-December.

Turnover was up by 56 per

cent to £156 million, with about half the increase contributed by organic growth and half by acquisitions. The year saw the first 12 month contribution from Lowfield Distribution, purchased in 1989, and the acquisition of the J Sainsbury contract operation at Northfleet from Hunter Saphir. Earnings per share were 20

per cent ahead at 22.5p. A final dividend of 6.3p makes 9.2p for the year, a 23 per cent improvement on 1989.

All sectors performed well except National, the clothing distribution network, which suffered from excess capacity. The National network will be merged with the Storcare warehousing and contract services operations.

Portals edges ahead

By MICHAEL TATE, CITY EDITOR

ONE industry that benefits from inflation is banknote printing, and Portals, the Hampshire security paper-maker, showed its resilience to the harsh economic climate with a rise from £25.5 million to £26.9 million in taxable trading profits last year.

The absence of land sales during the year, however, has deprived the group of a surplus to match the £4.2 million exceptional credit taken in 1989 on the disposal of farmland. Therefore, pre-tax profits technically fell from £29.7 million to £26.9 million.

Below the line, the group has been hit by the £8 million settlement of a dispute with Thames Water over the sale of its water treatment division, which, after taking various credits into account, has left an extraordinary loss of £4.4 million. Thus, attributable profits fell to £15.4 million (£21.2 million), although earnings, fully diluted, and ignoring the land sales, rose to 30.6p (28.1p). The final dividend is held at 8p, for a total up 13 per cent to 13p.

Profits at Portals' paper-making rose 17 per cent to £16.5 million. The protection and control products division saw profits rise 12 per cent to £8.5 million. Margins, however, fell from 9.7 to 9.2 per cent. Net cash of £13.8 million turned into borrowings of £14.4 million as the purchase of JR Crumpton came on to the balance sheet, to leave gearing at about 15 per cent.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Rosyth Dockyard wins £20m contract

ROSYPH Royal Dockyard has won a £20 million contract to refurbish 720 coaches for London Underground. The contract will safeguard more than 200 jobs at Rosyth and goes some way to cushioning the effects of a shortfall in the defence ministry workload.

The dockyard is managed by a subsidiary of Babcock International Group, which has just acquired Tickford Rail, the company that has placed the order. The four-year contract, which relates to the Victoria, Northern and Bakerloo lines, represents a significant entry to a very active commercial market, says Babcock.

Duracell to go public

DURACELL International, the American battery firm that was once a potential Hanson acquisition, is going public in a flotation valuing it company at \$1 billion. In an effort to save \$34 million a year in interest, 20 million new Duracell shares will be priced between \$12 and \$14 to raise up to \$280 million to cut long-term debt to \$1.16 billion.

DAF losses due to slump

THE main contributor to a fall into losses at DAF, the Anglo-Dutch van and bus maker, was a 30 per cent slump in the British commercial vehicle market. Losses before extraordinary items for the year to end-December were 149.6 million guilders (£45 million) compared with a £171.7 million profit in 1989. Turnover fell to £1.48 billion.

Thomson Travel soars

DESPITE a severe recession in the holiday industry that cut its sales by 15 per cent to £1.6 billion, Thomson Travel Group, Britain's largest tour operator, increased profits from £27 million to £57.7 million last year.

Thomson Tours, which lost £15.9 million in 1989, contributed profits of £10.3 million although passenger numbers fell by 1.4 million to three million. The Thomson Corporation, the Canadian parent, reported 1990 earnings down from US\$420 million to \$385 million, due to higher interest charges. The dividend is kept at 11 cents a share.

Tullow Oil loses £1.4m

TULLOW Oil, in which Enterprise Oil holds a 5 per cent stake, reported net losses of £1.56 million (£1.42 million) for 1990 after an exceptional charge of £1.14 million for the rationalisation of unwanted Italian interests. The Dublin company earned net income of £189,929 in 1989. There was a loss per share of 1.34p, against earnings of 0.18p.

EC to review cash transfers

THE European Commission is setting up two committees to seek ways to slash the cost and increase the speed of the millions of money transfers that banks process each day in the European Community. "There is widespread recognition of the need for rapid improvement in our systems of payment," said Sir Leon Brittan, the EC competition commissioner.

Sun Life gains 15%

SUN Life, the insurance and pensions group, reported that net profits rose 15 per cent to £32.5 million in the year to end-December, but the company gave warning of a gloomy short to medium term outlook because of the continuing weakness of the underlying economy.

Total new business was £769.6 million, up 13 per cent. Total funds under management fell from £8.5 billion to £8 billion. A 33.65p final dividend makes 47p for the year, up 11.7 per cent after adjusting for last year's rights issue.

ABB Asea expects big Kuwaiti orders

From WOLFGANG MÜNCHAU IN BERLIN

ABB Asea Brown Boveri, the Swiss and Swedish-owned electrical and power engineering group, expects a massive revenue boost this year from reconstruction orders from eastern Germany and Kuwait.

The orders, involving power generation equipment and power distribution systems, are expected to add DM 2 billion to revenues in 1991 and the following years for eastern Germany alone. Pre-tax profits for the group rose 21 per cent to \$1.11 billion, broadly in line with expectations, with revenues growing even stronger, by 30 per cent to \$26.7 billion. ABB employs about 15,000 in Britain, its fourth largest European operating base, where it has 75 locations and 42 subsidiaries. Turnover was £560 million, but the British recession hit its construction-related businesses which, so far, have suffered about 700 redundancies.

COMPANY BRIEFS

JAMES WILKES (Fin)
Pre-tax: £5.6m (£2.5m)
EPS: 22.4p (20.3p)
Div: 5.5p, mkg 10p

Total dividend last time was 9p. Group's trading performance is holding up well. Final dividend will be paid on May 31.

GABICCHI (Int)
Pre-tax: £0.88m (£0.84m)
EPS: 3.8p (3.8p)
Div: 1.4p (1.4p)

Turnover up 9% to £12.5m. Board expects a satisfactory outcome for the current year. Balance sheet remains strong.

TAY HOBBS (Int)
Pre-tax: £2.15m (£2.02m)
EPS: 6.3p (6.1p)
Div: 1.2p (1.2p)

Ordinary trading, plus likely contributions from land sales, will produce "encouraging" result for the full year.

DOLPHIN PACKAGING
Pre-tax: £3.2m (£2.5m)
EPS: 10.8p (8.8p)
Div: 2.8p, mkg 4.3p

Final results. Total dividend last year was 3.7p. Gearing is now less than 50%. Prospects remain encouraging.

LAMBERT HOWARTH (Fin)
Pre-tax: £2.88m (£3.27m)
EPS: 31.1p (38p)
Div: 7.8p, mkg 11.25p

Dividend for year compares with 10p payout for 1989. Profits are up if £1.2m exceptional gain in 1989 is stripped out.

STAG FURNITURE (Fin)
Pre-tax: £1.2m (£2.4m)
EPS: 6.1p (17.8p)
Div: 3.5p, mkg 5.5p

Total dividend compares with 7.5p in 1989. Turnover was down to £28.5m (£41m) following closure of Letchworth factories.

TRACE COMPUTERS (Int)
Pre-tax: £0.03m (£0.9m)
EPS: 0.06p (4.78p)
Div: 0.55p (0.55p)

Interest charge increased to 20.2m (£0.04m). Turnover jumped 72% to £9.95m, mainly through acquisitions.

FW THORPE (Int)
Pre-tax: £0.82m (£0.4m)
EPS: 3.25p (2.15p)
Div: 0.7p (0.825p)

Slowdown expected in second half but company confident of increasing market share. Turnover rose by 32%.

MALLETT (Fin)
Pre-tax: £2.68m (£3.65m)
EPS: 17.27p (17.11p)
Div: 4p, mkg 6p

Dividend is up from 5.8p in 1989. Pre-tax profits in the second half fell by 41.4% due to economy and interest charges.

BRITANNIC ASSURANCE
Pre-tax: £0.09m (£1.8m)
EPS: N/A
Div: 17.3p, mkg 25.3p

Final results. Total dividend last year was 20.75p. Premium income rose to £298.7m from £267.7m.

BRITISH MICHAIR (Fin)
Pre-tax: £2.5m (£4.5m)
EPS: 12.71p (23.28p)
Div: 7.1p, mkg 8.5p

Total payout unchanged from last year. Engineering activities contributed 80% of total profits of group.

FORWELL GROUP (Fin)
Pre-tax: £0.7m loss
EPS: 6.3p loss (5.5p)
Div: Nil, mkg 0.375p

Dividend compares with 1.32p for 1989. Pre-tax profit in 1989 was £1.2 million. Company says 1991 began well with £4m new orders.

WSP HOLDINGS (Fin)
Pre-tax: £1.5m (£0.57m)
EPS: 10.1p (6.4p)
Div: 1.8p, mkg 2.9p

Total dividend last year was 2.4p. Company says it is well placed but warns of year of "difficult trading conditions".

ARCOLECTRIC (Fin)
Pre-tax: £0.45m (£0.22m)
EPS: 4.38p (2.28p)
Div: 0.55p, mkg 1.08p

Dividend for 1989 was 0.96p. Export sales up 21% last year with static domestic sales. Cash flow improved.

"Looking to the future, we have the ability to finance our growth ambitions from our own resources, as well as continuing to reward our shareholders with real dividend increases."

Sir Patrick Sheehy, Chairman

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

£1 = \$1.79 for 1990 (\$1.64 for 1989)

Year to December
1989 1990

Change

CONTINUING GROUP TURNOVER (including Farmers' exchanges)	£17,572m	£18,474m	+5%
PRE-TAX PROFIT	£1,782m	£963m	-46%
DIVIDENDS PER SHARE - ACTUAL	30.0p	31.1p	+4%
- PROFORMA*	26.4p	31.1p	+18%

- 1990 transitional year for B.A.T Industries. Demergers and disposals successfully completed on schedule. Commitment to higher dividend payout met and share buy-back implemented. Financial strength maintained with net debt/equity ratio of 54 per cent at year end.
- Pre-tax profit of £963 million reflected exceptional combination of adverse factors in Eagle Star's general business.
- Financial services trading profit reached £195 million with higher profits from Farmers, Allied Dunbar and Eagle Star Life, offsetting the poor result from Eagle Star's general business.
- Record £966 million trading profit from tobacco with the principal operations performing well. Group cigarette exports 19 per cent higher.

*On a proforma basis, excluding dividends attributable to the demerged companies.



B.A.T INDUSTRIES

Full financial statements will be delivered to the Registrar of Companies and carry an unqualified audit report. The full results are being posted to shareholders and copies are available from the Company Secretary, B.A.T Industries plc, Windsor House, 50 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0NL.

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Markets await the virtuous circle

COMMENT

On Budget day plus one, it is far too early to write off the bull market that began late last year with the FT-SE 100 index below 2,000. As we pointed out yesterday it is far easier to identify losers rather than winners among individual shares. But first day trading after the Chancellor has unveiled his Budget secrets is a notoriously unreliable guide to longer term developments.

Prior to the first Lamont offering, shares had fallen in the first month of post Budget trading in no less than eight of the past 12 years. Yet, for most of that period shares were in a glorious upward trend. If there is a pattern to be detected it is that two to three months after Budget day, markets had recovered their initial falls and resumed their climb.

That is broadly what analysts are now expecting this year, though it would be wrong to claim unanimity. Among the leading forecasters, BZW is taking a more cautious line than most and has a year end Footsie target of 2,450, barely changed from yesterday's close of 2,441.2.

Phillips & Drew hopes for an equally cautious 2,500 by Christmas, but most are far more cheerful.

Goldman Sachs sees 2,600 in three months and 2,800 on a 12 month view. James Capel expects 2,800 by the first quarter of 1992. Hoare Govett would agree with that mid-year objective. Kleinwort Benson leads the bulls, predicting that the index will reach 3,000 in about a year from now.

For the equity market, the hole in Norman Lamont's Budget was an unshakeable faith that a strong recovery will be under way by mid year that will boost output by 2 per cent following a much sharper fall than expected in the preceding 12 months. Such a recovery hinges mightily on a resurgence of consumer confidence and spending, yet the VAT increase to 17.5 per cent is pulling in the opposite direction. The crucial element here is a continuing sharp fall in interest

rates. If it develops over the next few weeks and months, substantial spending power will be released through mortgage cuts, a far more potent stimulus than tax tinkering can provide. If this engine of growth builds up steam, the virtuous circle of lower inflation, lower interest rates, more spending and recovery will be under way. For the moment the jury is out and fund managers will await their return.

Gilts shine

The gilt-edged market took a while to absorb the good news from a Budget that should bring large profits to dealers. Prices fell while Norman Lamont was on his feet, recovered by the time he sat down and moved ahead, at least

at the long end, on the morrow. The Treasury forecast of an £8 billion 1991 borrowing requirement was in the middle of market assumptions. Allowing for redemptions, that implies the Bank of England might have to sell up to £12 billion of gilt-edged on the steady funding programme, depending on how successful National Savings are at attracting the public's money.

The "bad" news was that the borrowing requirement might rise to £12.5 billion next year, but this should not really have come as a shock. In principle, extra supply should send prices down. In an increasingly integrated international bond market, however, a bigger supply after a long dearth of new issues should raise interest in British government stock.

The proviso is that the Bank of England markets stock in this

international context, eschewing provincial detail and concentrating on establishing a rolling portfolio of stocks with enough liquidity to attract international investors.

The Bank took an early step to set out its professional stall by announcing a series of auctions of between £1 billion and £2 billion, starting on April with a conventional short-dated stock.

The trend of stock prices and international interest will rest on the market's confidence in the present government's management of control over inflation, short-term interest rates and sterling, as well as its views of a possible alternative government. The depth of the slump should be good news on this score, underlined in the Treasury's much lower forecast of 4 per cent retail price inflation in the fourth quarter.

If that is sustained, as Mr Lamont confidently predicted, real long-term yields after

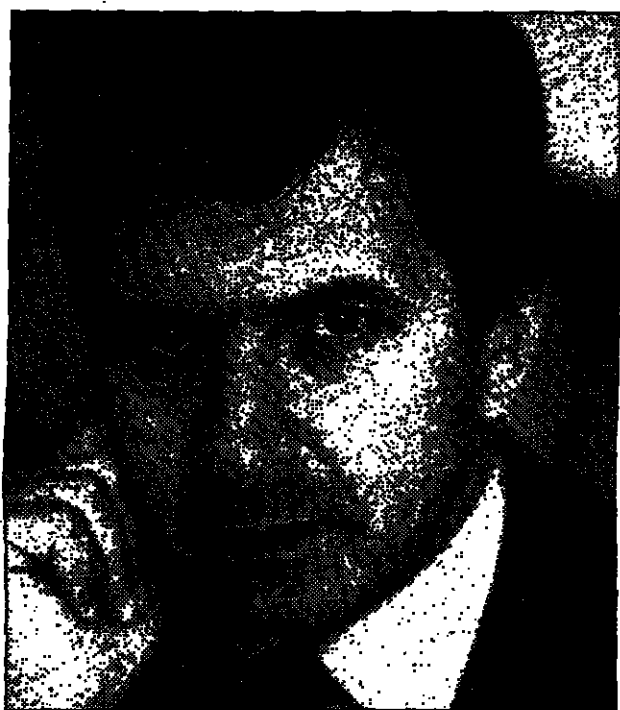
inflation would be an enticing 6 per cent.

Bravo ICI

It probably comes as little comfort to the 600-plus who are losing their jobs as a result of the Kemira debacle or the others who will go with ICI's restructuring, but Sir Denys Henderson's pay cut should be noted by the heads of other British companies where profits are coming under pressure.

Fair is as fair does, and Sir Denys, the down-to-earth chairman of ICI, saw £66,000 sliced off performance-related bonuses in 1990, a year when ICI signally failed to perform and pre-tax profits fell by £550 million to £977 million. He had to jog along on a mere £448,000, a modest sum for the head of a company of ICI's size, while the total bill for directors' emoluments slumped from £3.1 million to £2.7 million. But ICI, noted bellwether for Britain's industrial sector, has set a fair benchmark for what is increasingly looking a grim results reporting season.

Rise in VAT puts retailers in a painful dilemma



Labels to please: Gerald Ratner will examine prices

NORMAN Lamont's first Budget as Chancellor may have been promoted as a Budget for business, but one part of that community which felt severely disappointed was the retail sector. Shopkeepers, who had been looking forward to the abolition of the poll tax to boost sagging sales, were depressed about the 2.5 percentage point increase in VAT to 17.5 per cent from April 1.

Almost without exception, the retail sector believes that the VAT rise will retard high street recovery. The first shock for shopkeepers in the Budget was the forecast of a fall in consumer expenditure of 1.75 per cent this year. This is on top of a 1.75 per cent fall in the second half of last year.

They knew this year would be tough, but this was an admission that the recession would be deeper and sharper than expected. Retail analysts had been expecting consumer expenditure to be flat this year, and Mr Lamont's forecast of a 2.25 per cent rise in consumer spending by the first half of next year looks optimistic to some retailers. Others are simply praying that they will be around to see it.

The news that the savings ratio has risen from a low of 4.5 per cent of personal, disposable income in the third quarter of 1988 to a high of 10.8 per cent at present does not cheer the retailers. The more people save, the less they spend.

But it was the increase in VAT that brought the real dilemma to shopkeepers. Do they pass on the increase in prices to the consumer, which is likely to lead to a further fall in sales, or do they try to absorb the price increases and thus cut their margins? Most have yet to make a decision.

If the price increase is passed on to the shopper it will mean an extra 25p for each £10 spent on consumer goods. It would add more than £5 to a £250 CD player, an extra £10 to a £400 washing machine, £25 to a £1,000 three-piece suite of furniture and £250 to a £10,000 car.

Robert Shrager, finance director of Dixons Group, the

electronics retailer, said: "The increase in VAT will not help consumer demand for our products although it will be offset in part by the saving on the poll tax. A couple paying poll tax will save £280 a year." In common with many retailers, Mr Shrager is not sure that the saving on poll tax will translate into spending in the shops. Although in theory a consumer will have to spend £5,600 on a vintage car before he is worse off, the psychological effects of higher prices and an increased desire to save, coupled with low consumer confidence could

can bear. I think we may see prices go up after April 1 and then come down again.

"It will mean reorganising all the price points. A pair of earrings at 99p just don't look right at £1.02. An item priced at £49.50 is wrong at £50.73. I think retailers will have to absorb much of the VAT increase, which will mean that instead of being a tax on spending, it will become a tax on profits. It's very bad news for the retail sector."

"We are pleased about the abolition of the poll tax, which did affect our customers when it was introduced, but what the government is giving back on poll tax it is taking away on increased VAT."

The administrative upheaval of introducing the extra charge is common to all retailers except those selling food, children's clothes, books and newspapers, all of which are exempt from VAT. Price points have to be rethought and the pricing mix of products juggled.

Nigel Whitaker, corporate affairs director of Kingfisher, the Woolworth, Comet and B&Q group, says that while he believes the changes to VAT and the poll tax will balance each other out over the medium to longer term, the cost of repricing products will be millions of pounds.

"The cost of repricing and relabelling will be substantial. For a retail chain with a couple of hundred stores and a wide range of products it will mean changing around 10 million labels."

Joan D'Olier, retail analyst at County NatWest, says that if the Chancellor wants to see an upturn in consumer spending, he will have to use interest rates. "Given that it was a broadly neutral Budget, he has left room for manoeuvre through interest rates but it's a fairly blunt instrument. It took a long time for rising interest rates to dampen consumer demand and it could take time to resurrect it. We are certainly not going to see the rise in consumption that we saw in the mid-1980s."

GILLIAN BOWDITCH

Hiccup for slimline BAT

TEMPUS

BAT shareholders have done well from the flotation of former subsidiaries Argos and Wiggins Teape Appleton. But the exercise left the remaining BAT Industries without enough British profits to reclaim all advanced corporation tax on dividends for some years.

Last year, the Eagle Star debacle meant earnings from all sources covered only four fifths of the dividend.

The best to be said of last year's results is that investors were carefully prepared for them and the dividend on the slimmed group went up the equivalent of 18 per cent by way of management apology.

Pre-tax profits fell by 46 per cent to £963 million and would have been worse but for the £58 million benefit of translating foreign profits at average rather than year-end exchange rates. Earnings fell 63 per cent to 23.9p per share because the lack of British profits pushed the tax charge up from 40 to 55 per cent.

This damage was due to Eagle Star, while BAT's 10 per cent of the free world tobacco market changed ahead as successfully as ever. Elimination of about £340 million of exceptional charges at Eagle Star will help this year.

At 700p, the shares sell at a silly 24 times last year's earnings. On Smith New

Court's prediction of £1.44 billion pre-tax for this year, and perhaps £1.9 billion if the insurance cycle turns up in 1992, this multiple would fall to 13.7 times earnings this year and about ten times next year's. That is ahead of events, so the shares depend on a dividend yield of 5.9 per cent and the hope of dividend increases ahead of inflation. Should that fail, Lord Hanson might step into Sir James Goldsmith's shoes.

Reckitt & Colman

IT says much for the conservative nature of Reckitt & Colman's management that an acquisition which leaves the group with interest cover of seven or eight times should be regarded as a bold corporate move.

The news a year ago that Reckitt would be paying 22 times earnings for the Boyle-Midway household division of American Home Products occasioned some concern. It was the food to household products group's biggest acquisition yet.

The benefits of the purchase were on display for the first

time with Reckitt's full-year figures, which included a second-half profits contribution from Boyle-Midway of £31.6 million before financing costs, and indicated that integration is proceeding faster than expected. Pre-tax profits were in line with expectations at £235 million, up from £217 million. A lower than expected tax charge, courtesy of Boyle-Midway, and a five-for-two share split sent the shares 39p ahead to £14.59.

Reckitt, despite the range of well-known names among its brands, cannot expect to be immune from the recession, as a disappointing performance from British household products demonstrates. The shares are at an all-time high, and on pre-tax profits of £270 million this year sell on 13.6 times earnings. Little chance of an immediate upsurge, but they remain a strong long-term hold.

Willis Corroon

ANY company that completes a sizeable acquisition less than two months before the end of its financial year cannot help but publish a fairly meaningless set of annual figures. Willis Corroon is no exception.

The group's pre-tax profit for 1990 is stated at £81.7 million, 33 per cent higher than the result from Willis Faber in 1989. The two figures should not be compared.

The 1990 profits include a £6.3 million contribution from Corroon & Black, the American retail broker, which officially joined the group on October 8. Profits were also boosted by a £4.4 million gain on currency forward selling.

Willis's underlying performance was more modest, with broking and consultancy turnover rising 8 per cent, while the growth in expenses was held to 7.5 per cent.

The results are also clouded by the vagaries of acquisition accounting. After its takeover of Stewart Wrightson, Willis held down costs by charging any expenses relating to the takeover to reserves.

A full contribution from Corroon & Black should boost the group's pre-tax profits to £120 million this year, but earnings per share will scarcely move from the present 19p due to the new shares in issue.

Willis's shares have performed strongly since the merger and at 312p now stand on a prospective p/e of 16. Given the caution in the statement from Roger Elliott, the chairman, this may be a suitable time to take profits.

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Baby softens hard Plastow

FOR one company chairman in particular, Norman Lamont's first Budget has not been the most important event of the week. Sir David Plastow, chairman and chief executive of Vickers, manufacturer of Challenger tanks, Rolls-Royce cars and Riva power boats, took a rare day away from his Millbank Tower office on Monday, after becoming a grandfather late on Sunday. His only daughter, Amanda, aged 28, a former nursing sister, gave birth to a baby boy, Charles Oliver James, at a hospital near the family home in Winchester, Hampshire. Plastow, aged 58, and reputed to be a hard and decisive businessman, was visibly softened by the experience, when he returned to his desk. "I actually held him in my arms," enthuses the proud grandfather. "It was wonderful." He adds that the third of the child's three names is the same as that of his own son, who is an army officer. "Mandy and Jamie have always been particularly close and so she wanted to include the name Jamie."

Tragic gem

A MYSTERIOUS aristocrat in a small Yorkshire community

to dispose of a valuable diamond with "a tragic history". The plot, worthy of an Agatha Christie novel began to unfold when the woman approached Brian Taylor of Barron & Barron, the accountant, and asked him to find a buyer for the gem. Taylor, used to unusual requests — he once carried out an audit on a snapper — telephoned Bernadette Forsey, a director of the International Network of Professional Accountants, and asked her for help. Forsey, a former personal assistant to David Owen, contacted Wim van den Reek, an accountant in Holland, who passed the details on to da Costa, a diamond cutting firm with a showroom in Amsterdam. The gem is now expected to change hands for a "five figure" sum, but the identity

of the seller still remains a mystery. "Although the stone will fetch a sizeable amount it will be small change for her. It came into the family and has a tragic history. She just wants to get rid of it," says Forsey, refusing to give any more away and leaving one to conclude that perhaps accountability is not always a boring profession after all...

A NEW definition of VAT is doing the rounds in the Square Mile. The letters, in view of Norman Lamont's speech, now stand for Vastly Assured Tories.

Printer in top form

THE Budget may not have assuaged Britain's retailers, but it was greeted with near delirium at the offices of Kalamazoo, the printing and computer systems concern. The company has just finished printing millions of poll tax forms and will now have to print a new batch, along with value-added tax forms and other items of stationery. "There are clear opportunities," says John Burgess, managing director of Kalamazoo Business Systems, who has his office on a semi-war footing to cope with the surge in business. "We have geared up our telesales division and expect many printing opportunities to arise within the next week." As luck would have it, the company has also

checking business mileage, which could limit the impact of the new national insurance levies. Just as well, since Kalamazoo has 400 company cars. "We have worked out that the Budget changes could cost us another £200,000 per annum," says Burgess.

Secret success

THE sleek £160,000 Bentley Continental R — the first new model in 40 years — caused a sensation when it was unveiled at the Geneva Motor Show last week. The vehicle has caused just as much of a sensation among Rolls-Royce dealers in Britain, since none of them had heard even a whisper that it was about to be launched. The maker, a subsidiary of Vickers, determined to make the launch one of the best kept secrets in motoring history, sent a locked briefcase to each of its 30 dealers in Britain, and told them to await further details. On the day of the launch, the intrigued dealers were sent keys, allowing them to open the case, revealing details of the new model for the first time. As only 280 Continentals will be produced each year, it may well be some time before the first one is spotted purring along British roads.

GRAFFITO on a hoarding in Bath, Avon: "Remember when inflation was something to do with a balloon?"

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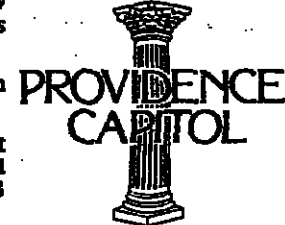
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Salary c.£13,000, travel concessions, contributory pension and health care schemes.

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Tagalog

How help

The prices in this section refer to Tuesday's trading

MONEY MARKETS

Exchange index compared with 1985 was up at 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

STERLING SPOT AND FORWARD RATES

Rate for Mar 20	Rate	Close	1 month	3 month
New York Mark	1.7970-1.7970	1.7775-1.7780	0.65-0.65P	0.55-0.55P
London	2.0143-2.0150	2.0559-2.0570	0.46-0.40P	0.38-0.38P
Amsterd.	3.2827-3.3054	3.3006-3.3054	1-Mpr	25-25P
Frankfurt	10.40-10.40	10.30-10.40	16-16P	40-40P
Comptoir	11.2651-11.2650	11.2054-11.2226	25-25P	65-65P
Paris	1.0980-1.1003	1.0980-1.1003	22-16P	50-51P
Brussels	3.7270-3.8227	3.7270-3.8227	22-16P	50-51P
Madrid	254.43-254.50	254.28-253.00	10-10P	34-34P
Barcelona	254.43-254.50	254.18-254.44	17-22P	57-70P
Geneva	277.44-278.00	277.44-278.00	22-16P	50-51P
Basel	11.2646-11.4474	11.3949-11.4128	25-25P	65-65P
Stockholm	9.9535-9.9563	9.9535-9.9563	25-25P	65-65P
Oslo	10.6930-10.7011	10.6930-10.7011	25-25P	65-65P
London	246.18-246.57	246.18-246.57	16-16P	25-25P
Paris	2.5267-2.5318	2.5267-2.5318	75-75P	150-150P
Frankfurt	2.5267-2.5318	2.5267-2.5318	75-75P	150-150P

Premium = pr. Discount = dc.

Source: Reuters

Sterling Spot 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 3 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 6 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 9 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 12 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 15 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 18 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 21 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 24 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 27 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 30 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 33 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 36 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 39 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 42 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 45 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 48 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 51 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 54 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 57 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 60 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 63 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 66 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 69 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 72 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 75 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 78 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 81 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 84 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 87 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 90 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 93 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 96 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 99 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 102 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 105 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 108 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 111 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 114 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 117 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 120 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 123 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 126 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 129 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 132 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 135 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 138 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 141 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 144 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 147 Month 92.2 (day range 81.9-92.2).

Sterling 150 Month 92.

[illegible]

How to match the perfect helper to an ideal family

You are about to return to work and desperate to arrange childcare. A work-place nursery is not available. Is it to be a nanny, mother's help or au pair? The cost may seem prohibitive and horror stories about bad experiences abound.

Sara McConnell, writing in *The Times* Weekend Money pages in January, calculated that a working mother would have to earn £13,200 just to cover the expense of a live-in nanny. Rates of pay, confirmed by several London agencies, stand at anything from £150 to more than £200 for a trained nanny, plus her tax and national insurance contributions, and board and lodging.

That, however, is for a top nanny taking what is referred to in the field as "sole charge". If you intend to share some of the work, particularly if you are working from home, you could pay much less for a mother's help. It is important to understand the distinction. Most problems are caused by employers — or employees — having unrealistic expectations.

Charlotte Breeze, co-author of *The Good Nanny Guide*, says: "Now that money is tight, some parents, unfortunately, are using mother's

Choosing a nanny is fraught with difficulty. Agencies are willing to help, but at a price. Beryl Dixon reports

helps or au pairs as nannies because they cannot afford a nanny's salary, and expect too much of them. That is not only unfair to the girl and the children, but positively dangerous.

A nanny will, if you wish, take sole charge. An au pair or mother's help requires some supervision and is best suited to the household in which one parent is around the house for part of the day.

Ruth Cordaux, of the Jeeves agency, herself a trained Nanny (the ultimate nanny qualification that demands a three-year training course) says: "A nanny is trained in childcare. Her responsibilities are primarily with the children. She will look after them completely, take care of her own room and the children's rooms, but not expect to do any other housework."

"She is often employed by the mum working full-time or with a busy social life. A mother's help is often 17 to 20 years old, unqualified but good with children. She will do some simple cooking, light

housework — not heavy cleaning — and will know that her job specification includes shopping, walking the dog and putting the mop over the kitchen floor at times. In other words, she helps."

She will expect between £70 and £100 a week. Third on the list comes the au pair, here to learn English and expecting time off to

'She is an extra pair of hands. I wouldn't dream of asking too much, like going away for a weekend'

attend classes. Au pairs are supposed to do a minimum number of hours of light housework and childcare in return for pocket money. The system is open to abuse, but guidelines on pay and conditions are laid down by the Home Office.

Once you have worked out exactly what kind of help you want, and what you can afford, how do you set about finding the girl of your dreams? Or boy? Some agen-

cies now provide male nannies, known in the United States as "mannies". It is not essential to use an agency. Many families find their helpers through recommendations or by advertising, but you do have to do a bit more leg work that way, interviewing carefully and checking references. An agency will do that for you and send you just a few short-listed applicants.

References can be tricky. Universal Aunts, a long-established agency, says: "We always write to a referee, no matter how immaculate the reference." Ruth Cordaux says: "Families often assume everyone is nice. We don't. We have had cases of forged references on headed writing paper." The agency's fee is, typically, 16 to 18 per cent of the first year's salary.

Sharing a nanny is popular, but this arrangement needs care. One family may feel they are not getting a fair share, or the nanny may feel exploited and leave. One agency has clients using a variety of methods. In one case, a nanny lives in one house, but bases

herself in the other on alternate weeks, caring for the children of both families.

In another, one client uses less of the shared nanny's time while working from home, but takes her and the children abroad on business trips, when the other family makes adjustments. In a third, two families employ one nanny for two and three days a week each. A daily nanny is another option, apparently the most popular among nannies themselves, so parents should get good applicants.

Universal Aunts found their service of a full-time or daily temporary nanny, or "substitute mum" at a moment's notice, in great demand during the Gulf war when some medically trained parents were called up.

Fiona Glass, a journalist who has five children aged six to 17, is an experienced employer of mother's helps and au pairs. "We have a Swedish girl, who is happy to share in the morning rush, fetch the children from school and do some housework," she says. "She is an extra pair of hands, and we would not dream of asking too much, such as going away for the weekend and leaving her in charge."

The Good Nanny Guide, by Charlotte Breeze and Hilary Gomer. Published by Century Press. Price £6.99.



Ulrike Halström (top): always happy to help Fiona Glass and her five children

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SPORTS LETTERS

England must take care to avoid complacency

From Mr Roy Grant

Sir, Now that the euphoria of England's rugby grand slam has been got out of the way, it is time for a realistic assessment of the team.

The fact that France scored three tries to England's one ought to be a matter of some concern even taking into consideration the inhibitions caused by a natural anxiety not to let the big prize slip away again. England's tally of five tries in four championship matches is not the mark of a great team. An inability to score tries despite territorial domination is a worrying weakness.

England have a ball-winning pack and supposedly highly talented backs, but the end product is still disappointing. Great New Zealand, Australian, French, and Irish teams score tries, but this England team does not, and I find it difficult to believe that they will be in at the death come the World Cup.

Now is the time to give serious thought to the XV's levels of the game, to England's inability to progress by moving the ball by hand before the old sin of complacency takes hold again, particularly as the present forwards will shortly be

being replaced and England's representative level below full international level have looked none too promising.

Yours faithfully,
ROY GRANT,

11 Glenloch Court,
Glenloch Road, NW3.

From Mr A. R. O'Hagan

Sir, And let it come to pass that the men of England did defeat those of France. And there was a gnashing of teeth from on high, for God had not intended it thus. And in retribution God did create Peter Bernard (Sport on Television, March 19) for to heap scorn upon the heads of the victorious English.

On the seventh day God rested, and being mightily bored with the Sunday tabloids did pause momentarily to invent the video machine, and did view once again the Great Conflict. And a wonderful sight did greet the Almighty's eyes, for so strongly did the French believe in their divine right to victory that they had omitted to learn the rule known as Offside - particularly the one named Blond (who was actually rather dark).

And then did He marvel at the manner in which the English used their giant men, and at the skill of the small scurrying one called Hill. And He did regret

due to replacement and England's representative level below full international level have looked none too promising.

And verily God did smile ruefully unto Himself, and reflect of His Swiftness of Mind and Spirit of Team of the English had overcome the Dexterity of the French. And therefore did God declare that this should be regarded as "just one of those things", and snote down the Bernard for decrying those whom he should have supported.

Yours faithfully,
A. RICHARD O'HAGAN,
3 Beaufort House,
Beaufort Avenue,
Didsbury, Manchester.

From Mr Gary Dickson

Sir, What a pity that the BBC camera team, just like the English players, were caught napping by the brilliant French try at Twickenham.

The move that led to Saint-Andre's try traversed the length of the pitch, but the first that viewers saw of the action it was well into the French 22.

Yours sincerely,
GARY DICKSON,
61 Station Road,
Canigvad, Co. Down.

The essence of amateurism

From Mr Jim Gorman

Sir, Rob Andrew (March 14) focused on two issues that concern the English rugby union squad, the intense public and media attention given to the players and the level of personal sacrifice and commitment made by those players. Rather than focus on these two aspects of the game at international level, Andrew and his England colleagues should perhaps consider the following.

Firstly, while wishing to remain "amateurs" on the field, the players have made it clear that they wish to cash in on off-the-field activities such as endorsements and advertisements. The potential for off-the-field earnings is created by the players' fame and high public profile, which in turn is a direct result of the public and media interest in their undoubted talents. If the players wish to benefit financially off the field, they must live with, rather than moan about, the interest and criticism that gives them the public profile from which the enormous earning potential arises.

Secondly, few would doubt the personal commitment and sacrifices made by the current squad members. However, the players should understand that the very essence of amateur sport is achievement through sacrifice. Anyone who has competed at international level in an amateur sport will appreciate the vast sacrifices made by many to reach their goal. Indeed, many of those preparing for the Barcelona Olympics are, even now, making considerable sacrifices. Their careers are being postponed, financial sacrifices are being made, and yet, for most, the reward will not be fame and fortune but simply a immense feeling of personal pride and satisfaction.

Yours sincerely,
JIM GORMAN,
75 Crabtree Lane, SW6.

True blue contest

From Mr R. W. Ashman

Sir, It's Boat Race time again and along with thousands of others I shall be watching the Thames bank at Hammersmith at the end of next week expecting to watch the annual procession. How can a greater uncertainty be brought to the event?

In the 1980s the race was dominated by Oxford; before that Cambridge had a long run of success. Should not a rule be introduced requiring members of winning crews to stand down. This would allow more undergraduates to obtain rowing experience, less predictable and help to remove suspicions of professionalism. Yours faithfully,
R. W. ASHMAN,
16 Chancellors Street, W6.

From Mr J. G. G. Wilson

Sir, Such is the business acumen of the chaps at Twickenham nowadays, why was there no video on offer, to go with the sale in the RFU shop at 4.10 last Saturday?

Yours faithfully,
J. G. G. WILSON,
29 Whitehall Gardens, W4.

Slice of the cake

From Mr Michael H. Davis

Sir, We have heard so much during the debate on professionalism in rugby union about preserving "what the game stands for", "the ethos", "the grass-roots" and other such expressions for "let's not let the players get their hands on any money at all costs" that one must wonder what exactly are these grass-roots.

I spent 15 years yo-yoing between the past and the XV's of a pretty ordinary club, enjoyed the high jinks of touring, never missed a home international at Twickenham and am now involved through my children in schools rugby and with the junior section of the local old boys club. Hardly Will Carling, but you don't come much grass-rootier!

The RFU exploits the commercial potential of the game to the full. We should not be fooled, for example, about the cost of debentures at Twickenham. The debenture is £1, which will generously be repaid after ten years. On top of that there is a non-refundable premium of £1,499 (£6,899 for companies) for the privilege of

being guaranteed a ticket at face value.

That makes the RFU the biggest lion in the game and yet none of its share, local tennis clubs middle through as ever and even our local football club doesn't seem to have changed much since my dad took me some 30 years ago. So why should the rugby authorities be so arrogant as to assume that if a handful of top players are paid whatever guile all that we hold dear about the game will crumble. For better or for worse the introduction of the leagues has changed this mythical "what the game stands for" out of all recognition.

In the meantime the world and his brother profit from the game at the highest level and only those who give the most, the players, are excluded. However, for us grass-rooters a change is taking place and that is the erosion of respect for the game and the stewardship of our sport. Come on Dudley Wood and your merry men, you are having your commercial cake and eating it. You surely can't begrudge a slice to those who baked it.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL H. DAVIS,
Hilltop, Pilgrims Lane,
Chaldon, Surrey.

A silent fanfare

From Mr E. A. Patrick

Sir, Mr Brennan (Sports Letters, March 14) asks when the Irish national anthem was last played at Twickenham? The answer is that it has never been played there, or at any other ground where the Irish rugby team was playing an away game.

When Ireland play at Lansdowne Road, the anthem

of the Irish Republic is heard as the game is relayed live within that country. However, the Irish rugby side represents the whole of that island and as such includes players from Northern Ireland. There is therefore no suitable anthem for the team.

Yours faithfully,
E. A. PATRICK,
18 Farm Road, Smeethwick,
Worley, West Midlands.

Court of Appeal

Law Report March 21 1991

Court of Appeal

City wagering contract enforceable

City Index Ltd v Leslie

Before Lord Donaldson of Lynton, Master of the Rolls, Lord Justice McCowan and Lord Justice Leggatt

[Judgment March 14]

Wagering contracts entered into by each or either party by way of business, in which clients lost or won variable sums dependent on changes or expected changes in indices, were enforceable by virtue of section 63 of the Financial Services Act 1986 as transactions within paragraphs 9 and 12 of Part I of Schedule 1, and were not protected by the Gaming Acts 1845 and 1892.

The Court of Appeal so held dismissing the appeal of Mr Spencer Leslie from Mr Alan Tyrrell, QC (The Times October 3, 1990) who, sitting as a deputy judge of the High Court, who had given judgment for City Index Ltd for £34,580 together with interest in respect of index betting transactions.

Miss Elizabeth Glosier, QC and Mr Michael Ashe, neither of whom appeared below, for Mr Leslie; Mr David Oliver, QC and Mr Richard Price for City Index.

THE MASTER OF THE ROLLS said that it was common ground that the transactions were wagering contracts, the only issue being whether the Gaming Acts were disapplied by section 63 of the 1986 Act.

The essential feature of City Index's index betting business was that the client, or punter, could win or lose variable amounts depending on the change or anticipated change in indices whether they were natural indices like the FT 30 FTSE 100; or in the case of currencies, an index formed by international rates of exchange;

or in the case of commodities, market prices.

Every index had a closing date and time and the client bet that the index would be more or less than a given number at that close. City Index formed their own view of what that number would be and quoted a spread consisting of two figures the higher being at or above their own forecast, the lower at or below.

If the client thought that the higher figure underestimated the level which the index would reach at the close, he placed an up or buy bet on the basis of the higher figure. If he thought City Index had overestimated, he would place a down or sell bet on the basis of the lower figure.

City Index formed their view on the basis of, *inter alia*, prices on the London International Financial Futures Exchange and other futures markets, where they could also deal with a view to laying off their potential liabilities. That might be relevant, since it resulted in what as between City Index and their client might be a pure betting transaction becoming a factor in true market making.

Further, his bet would be closed at the closing time on the basis of the actual figure of the index at that time. Unlike fixed odds or totalisator betting, the client did not hazard a known and limited stake, his liability was unlimited.

In fact, it seemed unlikely that the client was allowed to opt out of his natural conclusion at the close, because the clients always, and City Index sometimes, had the option of entering into a sell bet of equal amount to an outstanding buy bet (and vice versa) the closing bet being made on the basis of City Index's then current spread.

By way of background, his Lordship referred to the existence of the commodity and financial markets to meet real commercial needs, to reconcile the apparently irreconcilable requirements of producers and users in relation to pricing.

In essence those who operated the markets backed their judgment of how the price would move between the moment the user needed to achieve certainty as to his costs and the moment the producer was willing to enter into firm contracts to supply.

In a sophisticated form dealers who did not wish to be involved in taking a long-term view of how the price of the commodity would move would enter into pairs of contracts, one for the notional sale and one for the notional purchase of a particular quantity of a commodity, the intention of both parties being that no property in the commodity should pass, but that the contracts would be fulfilled by paying sums of money based on price differences at different times.

That was a contract for differences of the type considered in *Universal Stock Exchange Ltd v Strachan* (1896) AC 16.

From such contracts it was a short step to contracts based on the movement of price indices which achieved the same basic objective. Mr Leslie's transactions consisted of bets on the Dow Jones Index and the price of Treasury Bonds.

The first condition of section 63 of the 1986 Act was met because although he was contracting as a speculator, City Index were doing so by way of business (see section 63(2)). They claimed that within the meaning of "buying" and "selling" in paragraph 12 they sold

and Mr Leslie bought rights under something which constituted both "contracts for differences" and "other contracts" within the meaning of paragraph 9.

His Lordship rejected the argument that the present transactions were contracts for differences.

The alternative was whether they were "any other contract the purpose or pretended purpose of which is to secure a profit or avoid a loss by reference to fluctuations in an index or other factor designated for that purpose in the contract" (see paragraph 9).

Miss Glosier had argued that the present transactions did not fall within "any other contract" since they lacked the purpose or pretended purpose required by paragraph 9; that both parties to a naked bet entered into it with the purpose of winning, which was different from securing a profit, that parties did not enter into such contracts for the purpose of avoiding loss and that the wording of the paragraph was apt to describe the activity of hedging but not of naked betting.

His Lordship rejected the argument. The crucial phrase "the purpose or pretended purpose of which is to secure a profit or avoid a loss" was odd if it were intended by its legislative ancestor. Purpose or pretended purpose was not confined to "any other contract" but also related back to "a contract for differences", in the latter context it was intended to legitimise contracts which, while pretending to be agreements for the actual sale and purchase of shares and so on were intended by the parties to be fulfilled by the payment of differences.

Further, the wording owed something to the definition of "dealing in securities" in sections 26 of the Prevention of Fraud (Investments) Acts 1939 and 1958. That legislative ancestry also tended to show that "secure a profit" was not used in the sense of protecting profits arising under another contract by means of hedging, but meant to obtain a profit. The present contracts were therefore "any other contracts" within the meaning of paragraph 9.

It was for consideration whether such betting transactions should be excluded from the ambit of the 1986 Act by exercise of the secretary of state's powers under section 2, or whether advice should be given by regulatory authorities with a view to preventing excessive credit being granted to the youthful or inexperienced.

Lord Justice McCowan delivered a concurring judgment and Lord Justice Leggatt delivered a judgment concurring in the result.

Solicitors: Cooksey & Co, Raskisons.

Preserving conservation areas

South Lakeland District Council v Secretary of State for the Environment and Another

Before Lord Justice Butler-Sloss, Lord Justice Mann and Sir Christopher Slade

[Judgment March 12]

The word "preserving" in section 27(8) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971 had to be interpreted in the wide sense of not causing harm, and not in the narrow sense of making a positive contribution to the preservation and enhancement of a conservation area.

The Court of Appeal so held in allowing an appeal from a judgment of Mr Lionel Read QC, who, sitting as a deputy High Court judge on February 26, 1990, had allowed an application by South Lakeland District Council and quashed a decision by an inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environment and another to refuse planning permission for the erection of a new house on the site of a conservation area.

In his decision letter the inspector said, *inter alia*: "I do not consider that it would be contrary to the important objectives... designed to protect the character of the conservation area... I would accept that the proposed house would be visible from Priest Lane, over the existing wall... I consider however that the effect of the wall and the existing trees and shrubs... that would be retained, the impact of a new house would not be great."

"In my opinion the effect on the character and appearance of

this part of the conservation area would be small... I very much appreciate the concern of the council and the local people... I am of the opinion however that that providing great care was exercised in the detailed design of the proposed house... the proposed house could be accommodated without damaging consequences to the appearance of the village."

The debate before the court was as to whether the decision-maker was bound to determine whether the proposed development would make a positive contribution to preservation and enhancement. If he was, then a determination that neither character nor appearance was harmed was an insufficient discharge of the duty for he would not have answered the correct question.

The deputy judge answered the question in accordance with his own previous decision in *Steinberg v Secretary of State for the Environment* (1989) 2 P.L.R. 91 in which he said: "There is, in my judgment, a world of difference between the issue which the inspector defined for himself - whether the proposed development would 'harm' the character of the conservation area - and the need to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area."

"In short, harm is one thing; preservation or enhancement is another... The concept of avoiding harm is essentially negative. The underlying purpose of section 27(8) seems to me to be positive."

Neither "preserving" nor "enhancing" was used in any meaning other than its ordinary English meaning. The court was not here concerned with enhancement, but with the ordinary meaning of "preserve" as a transitive verb which was "to keep safe from harm or injury; to keep in safety, save, take care of, guard" (*Oxford English Dictionary* 2nd edition vol XII p404). In his Lordship's judgment, the inspector's appearance could be said to be preserved where they were not harmed.

The statutorily desirable object of preserving the character or appearance of an area was achieved either by a positive contribution to preservation or by development which left character or appearance unharmed, that is to say, preserved.

His Lordship said that it followed that he respectfully disagreed with the views of the deputy judge in *Steinberg* which he had applied in the present case.

Sir Christopher Slade and Lord Justice Butler-Sloss delivered concurring judgments.

Solicitors: Treasury Solicitor; Winkworth & Pemberton for Miss Margaret Bailey, Kendall.

which, by virtue of this Act ought to have been brought in the county court, it shall not be treated as improperly brought, but shall be transferred to the county court."

Mr Stephen Cogley for the appellants; the respondents did not appear and were not represented.

HIS LORDSHIP said that the word "shall" on each occasion in section 141 was imperative. In relation to the first use of

the word it was not possible to see how the court could dismiss an action as an abuse of its process when Parliament had said that an action of that type in the High Court shall "not be treated as improperly brought".

The court had no discretion whether to allow such actions to continue. It was required by the statute to transfer to the county court those wrongly started in the High Court.

Solicitors: Lopian Wagner, Manchester.

Expert help required

Regina v Tozer

The possible effect of hypoglycaemia on intent was outside the ordinary experience of jurors, who could not bring to bear their own judgment without the assistance of expert evidence.

The Court of Appeal (Lord Justice Russell, Mr Justice Hobhouse and Mr Justice Otton) so held unanimously on February 26 in a reserved judgment quashing convictions at Liverpool Crown Court (Mr Justice Mans-Jones and jury) of John Tozer, aged 37, of attempted murder and of wounding with intent, for which he had been sentenced to five years imprisonment.

Section 141 provides: "(1)... the county court shall have jurisdiction to hear and determine (a) any action by a creditor or owner to enforce a registered agreement or any other agreement relating to a mortgage of land... and such an action shall not be brought in any other court."

"(2) Where an action... is brought in the High Court

despite the provisions of section 141 of the Consumer Credit Act 1974.

Section 141 provides: "(1)... the county court shall have jurisdiction to hear and determine (a) any action by a creditor or owner to enforce a registered agreement or any other agreement relating to a mortgage of land... and such an action shall not be brought in any other court."

"(2) Where an action... is brought in the High Court

despite the provisions of section 141 of the Consumer Credit Act 1974.

Despite the careful summing up of all other issues, the verdicts had to be regarded as unsafe and unsatisfactory and a retrial of both counts was ordered under section 3 of the Criminal Appeal Act 1968, as amended by section 43 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988.

Time limits for arguing judicial review applications for leave

Practice Direction: Crown Office List

New time limits for presenting *ex parte* applications for leave to apply for judicial review were laid down in a practice direction delivered by Lord Justice Watkins, sitting in the Queen's Bench Division Court with Mr Justice Allott and Mr Justice Cresswell on March 18. The new direction, applied to the Crown Office List, the elements of which were described in *Practice Direction (Thais in London)* (1981) 1 W.L.R. 1296.

LORD JUSTICE WATKINS said: Striking out for want of prosecution. I further to *Practice Direction (Crown Office List)* (1987) 1 W.L.R. 2321, cases which were approaching the top of Part B of the Crown Office List had to be

confirmed as active by the applicant, or the appellant as the case might be.

The Crown Office would seek written confirmation that the case was active and if such confirmation was not received within two weeks of the request from the Crown Office the matter would be listed before the court to show cause as to why it should not be struck out for want of prosecution.

Where a solicitor ceased to act for a party and the party had not given notice of change of solicitors in accordance with Order 67, rule 1 of the Rules of the Supreme Court, the solicitor might apply to the court, by way of summons to the Master of the Crown Office, for an order declaring that the solicitor had ceased to act for that party (Order 67, rule 6).

3 If no such order was obtained, the solicitor would be regarded as continuing to act and notice of listing dates, etc would be given to the solicitor whose responsibility it would be to brief counsel to appear before the court.

Ex parte applications for leave 4 With effect from April 9, 1991 applications for leave to apply for judicial review would be listed on the footing that the application would take no more than 20 minutes, and any reply by a respondent who attended such an application would take no more than 10 minutes.

Where counsel considered that the hearing of the application would require more than the time allowed he should provide a written estimate and a special fixture would be arranged.

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● RACING 37
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SPORT

Robson casts resentful look back at England

By STEVE ACTESON

NOBODY will have taken a keener interest in the announcement of the England football squad to play the Republic of Ireland than Graham Taylor's predecessor as manager, Bobby Robson. Busily steering PSV Eindhoven towards a Dutch league and cup double, he still takes a great interest in the fortunes of the national side.

He harbours, however, resentment that some club managers either criticised him in public over his team selection and tactics or were not always co-operative over releasing players during his eight years at Lancaster Gate.

"My message is 'Back Graham Up' and I certainly hope he gets the support that I did not from some individuals," Robson said. "You'll never hear me say anything critical about the teams he selects because you must support the England manager and I would never do to Graham Taylor what certain people did to me."

"Despite what some people might like to think, the only people who actually knew what being the England manager is all about were Walter Winterbottom, Alf Ramsey, Don Revie, Joe Mercer, Ron Greenwood, myself and now Graham, because we were the only ones to have done the job."

"I always look at Graham's squads with great interest and they are still not so different from mine. He has brought in Wright from Crystal Palace, as I might have a year ago, but he had a broken leg then."

"Graham knows he's under pressure to qualify but he is off to a very good start. The Irish are still just as dangerous as ever. I see no sign that they have gone back at all. They will miss Whelan but we will be without Gascoigne, so that cancels that out."

"People like the Irish love to come to that great cathedral of Wembley. It inspires them. It lifts their spirits, their morale and their determination. I'd be surprised if Ireland won but the England team know they will have to fight tooth and nail."

"But coming out of the World Cup, the England players will be very confident and very determined to beat Ireland. There is a great passion within the England team."

"We have all heard talk that when the Irish or the Welsh or the Scots pull on their national jerseys it inspires them more than it inspires the English but that is not true."

"It is easy to say that our colleagues from these neighbouring countries have more fire but in my eight years as England manager I never came across one player who did not give of his best in



Robson: going for double

terms of passion and commitment. If they hadn't, they wouldn't have been selected again."

Robson made an unsatisfactory start at PSV, whom he joined two days after leaving England to the World Cup semi-finals. "From the start, I had an absolute catalogue of problems and that disturbs a team's rhythm," he said.

"Romario, our brilliant little Brazilian centre forward, was injured in the very first match. We were five up with five minutes to go and then off he came and he was out four and a half months."

"Our captain, Eric Gerets was out for two months; Barry van Aarle, a Dutch international, has just played his first game of the season; and we've had problems with Bosman and Koeman."

"These are the sort of players that win you championships, and you know what? The season began in August, and the weekend before last, when we beat Feyenoord 6-0, it was the first time that the entire squad was fit and I had everyone to choose from."

"With the injury problems, the Montpellier game came too early for us. Some people were suggesting I was already under pressure but I have a two-year contract and I expect to serve it out honourably and faithfully."

In beating RKC Waalwijk 3-0 on Sunday, PSV moved six points clear of their closest challengers, Ajax, who have two games in hand.

"We are the only club capable of doing the double," Robson said. "We are in the last four of the cup and, although Ajax and Groningen can win the league, they are out of the cup. Feyenoord, whom we play in the semi-finals, and Roda may still be in the cup but in my opinion they have no possible chance of winning the league."

"If we achieve the double, the owners and supporters of the club will be delighted. If we don't, there may be pressure on me but that pressure is always exerted from outside, isn't it? It never comes from within."

Trouble flares in cup-ties

MARSEILLES (AFP) — Police were called into action as trouble broke out between rival AC Milan and Marseille supporters, waiting for the European Cup tie to start yesterday.

Clashes had taken place before Italians inside the stadium began throwing missiles. Trouble was also brewing in eastern Germany, where local Dynamo Dresden supporters threw stones at a coach carrying Red Star Belgrade supporters, breaking several windows.

Brondby, of Denmark went through to the semi-finals of the Europa Cup in Moscow, 4-2 on penalties, after losing 1-0 to finish 1-1 on aggregate against Torpedo Moscow. In Genoa Legia Warsaw reached the semi-finals of the Cup Winners' Cup 3-2 on aggregate, after drawing 2-2 with Sampdoria, following their 1-0 win in the first leg.

Financial pressure forces Luton to part with Dowie

IAIN Dowie, Luton Town's Northern Ireland international forward, joined West Ham United yesterday for £480,000. Peter Nelkin, the Luton chairman, said that financial pressure forced the club into the sale.

"I think it is a good deal. It is very good business for Luton," Nelkin said. Luton's annual general meeting will be held on Monday that the club lost more than £1 million last season and had a bank overdraft of £1.2 million.

West Ham, who are among the contenders for promotion to the first division, need a forward to replace their leading goalscorer, Trevor Morley, who was stabbed in a domestic incident a fortnight ago.

Walsall has gone up for sale for the third time in five years — along with the lease on its new £4 million Bescot Sta-

dium. The fourth division club's owners, Davenham Ltd, and landlords, Denglen Ltd, are in the hands of administrative receivers and every asset is up for sale.

Davenham owns 76 per cent of the shares in Walsall, while Denglen has a 102-year lease on the stadium, where the team started playing this season.

A Football League management committee commission yesterday dismissed a complaint by Rochdale arising from the circumstances behind Terry Dolan's decision to leave the club to take over as manager at Hull City. Rochdale lodged a formal protest under regulation 88, which covers the question of inducements.

Wolverhampton Wanderers last night played down suggestions they may yet be

forced to sell Steve Bull, the leading League goalscorer, if they fail to gain promotion to the first division this season.

"There has been a lot of talk about Bull wanting to play in the first division, but he insists he wants to get there with us," Graham Turner, the Wolves manager, said.

"He has two years of his contract left and has not indicated to me that he wants to leave."

Stuart Gray, the Aston Villa captain, will miss the rest of the season after undergoing an operation on a torn stomach muscle in London yesterday. Tony Daley, the club's England B winger, is given a 50 per cent chance of being fit for Aston Villa's match against Sunderland at Roker Park on Saturday. Daley has been troubled with a hamstring injury.



Power: Edberg, of Sweden, on his way to beating Stich, of Germany, by two sets to one in the Lipton International tournament in Key Biscayne. Report, page 38

System rules out Reardon

By STEVE ACTESON

RAY Reardon, the six-time world snooker champion, may play his last professional tournament match in the world championship qualifying event at the Guildhall Preston on Monday.

Reardon, aged 58, will play either Fred Davis or Jason Prince in the second round, in a bid to get to the final stages at the Crucible theatre, Sheffield, for what may be the last time.

With snooker going open next season, there will be qualifying events for tour-

naments from May through to August, but Reardon cannot afford to turn his back on a lucrative summertime contract with various holiday camps. He said: "The new system is ridiculous, there should be some sort of exemption for former world champions like myself. If the World Masters (an invitational tournament) goes ahead again next season, or there is a seniors event, I may well play in that, but Monday's game could be my last in a professional tournament. I could be taking

premature retirement, which will be a considerable shame because I still love the game, I am working hard at it and feeling just as good as ever."

Reardon, a former miner and later a policeman, was decorated for bravery, turned professional in 1967 and won the first of his world titles by beating John Pulman 39-34 three years later, and the last of them in 1978. He was runner-up to Alex Higgins in 1982, but his most recent title came in 1983, when he won the Welsh championship.

W Indies set a testing target

GEORGETOWN (Reuters) — West Indies set Australia a testing target in the final limited-overs international cricket match at the Bourda here in Guyana yesterday. West Indies were all out for 251 with one ball of their 50 overs remaining.

It was their best total of the series but disappointing given a strong position of 216 for four with 10 overs to go. West Indies won the toss and batted first. Phil Simmons and Haynes began slowly but, after taking 29 off two overs from Steve Waugh, reached 76 after 15 overs. Peter Taylor, the spinner, had Simmons caught on the square leg boundary for 34 and Haynes leg before.

His success inspired Allan Border, the Australian captain, to bring himself on, only to be hit for 21 in two overs including a six by Richardson. But with Mark Waugh running out Gordon Greenidge with a direct hit from the extra cover boundary and having Vivian Richards caught at long on, West Indies lost four wickets for 70.

Gus Logie and Richardson added 62 before Craig McDermott and Merv Hughes came back to dismiss both. Richardson having scored his runs off 88 balls with 11 fours and a six. McDermott finished with three for 29 off his 10 overs and Hughes three for 33, including a second spell of three for nine in 3.5 overs as West Indies lost their last six wickets for 34 runs.

Richards, the West Indies captain, hinted at retirement yesterday. He said: "I would not pinpoint a particular date to retire, but at this moment, it looks as if this tour against Australia may be my last in the West Indies. The trip to England may also be my last abroad."

WEST INDIES	
P V Simmons c Hughes b Taylor	34
D L Haynes c Taylor b Taylor	21
R B Richardson c Taylor b Taylor	34
G S Greenidge run out	10
A Richards c Taylor b Taylor	10
A L Logie b McDermott	17
C L Hooper c Taylor b McDermott	10
P J L O'Brien c Taylor b McDermott	10
A H Gray c Taylor b McDermott	10
G A Waugh b Taylor	10
S P Merv Hughes	33
Extras (b 4, w 1, nb 2)	21
Total (48.5 overs)	251

AUSTRALIA	
G R Marsh not out	52
D C Boon b Patterson	9
D M Jones not out	19
M A Border not out	19
Extras	17
Total (26 wickets, 28 overs)	138

W A Taylor b Taylor, P L O'Brien c Taylor b Taylor, M A Border c Taylor b Taylor, D C Boon c Taylor b Taylor, D M Jones c Taylor b Taylor, G R Marsh c Taylor b Taylor.

Piggott enters Derby picture

By MICHAEL SEELY
RACING CORRESPONDENT

WHAT price Lester Piggott riding his tenth Derby winner at the age of 55? Shorter than you might think. Peter Davies, the 14-1 favourite for the Ever Ready Derby, is owned by the maestro's old friend and ally, Charles St George, and St George is already weighing the possibility of asking Piggott to ride the colt at Epsom.

Peter Davies is trained by Henry Cecil, whose former contract rider, Steve Causton, is now retained by Sheikh Mohammed. As Sheikh Mohammed has an amazing 23 horses entered in the premier classic, there is every prospect he will be calling upon Causton's services. Then enter Piggott.

Discussing the possibilities at yesterday's Ever Ready

Derby lunch, St George said: "I would prefer Steve to ride him but if he is not available any of the top five jockeys, including Lester, would do."

Piggott, an absentee from yesterday's Ever Ready lunch in London, said from his home in Newmarket: "Of course I'd like to win the Derby again, who wouldn't? Peter Davies is a tough sort, but it's early days yet to be talking about who's going to win the Derby or even what I'll be riding."

Piggott misses the traditional start of the Flat at Doncaster this afternoon to ride three horses for the French champion trainer, Andre Fabre, at Maisons-Laffitte, but Pat Eddery and Steve Causton will be in action on Town Moor.

The general feelings of uncertainty in the industry in the

face of the continuing recession has been aggravated by the rise in VAT and its widespread implications for the bloodstock industry. Reflecting the mood, Piggott said: "It's difficult to be optimistic. It's the general effects of the recession. Costs keep going up with nothing extra coming in to meet them."

However, racing folk are nothing if not buoyant and a general party mood prevailed at the Derby lunch. Pat Eddery, already a 3-1 chance to become champion jockey for the eighth time, was looking bronzed and fit after a holiday in Barbados with Willie Carson.

Eddery, however, thought otherwise. "I'm fat," he complained. "I'm 2lb overweight at 8st 8lb. In the Derby I like Peter Davies, but a possible

outsider is Silver Rainbow."

An unraced colt by Rainbow Quest, Silver Rainbow is owned by Khalid Abdullah trained by Guy Harwood.

Trainers are always cautious at this early stage of the campaign and Michael Stoute, twice successful in the Derby with Shagari and Shahrastani, proved no exception. With five horses in the first ten in the betting, including his Royal Lodge Stakes winner Mujazif, the trainer said: "Mujazif is the only proven horse I have. He was stuck in the mud behind Peter Davies in the Royal Lodge. Of the others, Opus House has had just the one start. He won very easily."

John Dunlop, who trained Shirley Heights to win at Epsom, has Majra, the 2,000 Guineas favourite, engaged at Epsom. In theory, he might say a mile as he's a half-brother to Salsabil, but in practice it's doubtful. "Circus Light, a half-brother to my Oaks winner Circus Plume, is likely to stay but he still has to prove that he is good enough to run in the Derby."

United Racecourses, owners of Epsom, have introduced a yearling entry scheme to begin later this year which they hope will help push prize-money towards £1 million in 1993 but Michael Grade, the head of Channel 4, urged them to go a step further and switch the race to a Saturday.

"It is up to racing to sort it out but we would love to see it run on a Saturday," he said. "It would triple our audience, and we are willing to pay." Sir Evelyn Rothchild, the chairman of United Racecourses, added his voice to criticism of the bookmakers' contribution to racing. "The bookmakers need to look closely at the way they extract money from the industry."

Cooke is close to calling it a day

By DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

GEOFF Cooke, the England rugby union team manager since 1987, may not be available to carry on as far as the World Cup this autumn.

He has applied for two vacant positions in county cricket and, if successful, would probably give up his rugby union interests at the end of the summer tour of Australia and Fiji.

It is a straightforward career choice but the implications for rugby are manifold. In the short term, the Rugby Football Union (RFU) would clearly wish to avoid having to change managerial horses before the tournament — for which England are now second favourites behind New Zealand. In the longer term, they would not wish to altogether lose a man of Cooke's calibre.

Cooke, chief executive of the British Institute of Sports Coaches (BISC), has applied for the post of chief executive at both Lancashire and Yorkshire county cricket clubs. The latter post was advertised locally only last week and a further national advertisement will appear today.

A Yorkshire spokesman said it hopes to finalise matters as soon as possible.

Cooke, aged 49, who played cricket for Cumberland in the 1960s, said: "I am only testing out the job market, putting a toe in the water."

"I still expect to be involved with England in Australia and Fiji and during the World Cup because, realistically, there are bound to be many applicants for cricket posts."

Dudley Wood, the RFU

secretary, said: "It must be understood that Geoff is a capable, ambitious chap and his first requirement must be to look after his own career."

The possibility that Cooke may leave his honorary post came as unwelcome news to the RFU. Wood said he would be "disappointed" if Cooke could not stay until after the World Cup — at which stage there was a tacit understanding that, like Roger Untley, the coach, whose decision has already been made, he would consider stepping down.

Cooke's three-year contract with the BISC expires at the end of the year, which would cover the period of the World Cup, although the time that rugby will demand during September and October will be huge for both management and players.

It is both the strength and weakness of rugby union that players and administrators give their time so freely — frequently at a cost to others, either family or employers.

"It may be the BISC will offer to renew my contract," Cooke said. "But it makes sense to me to explore the possibility of other jobs, to see whether I can get a secure job which will take me through the rest of my working life."

"I owe that to my family. Of course, rugby gives me satisfaction and enjoyment but all rugby coaching jobs are unpaid."

Were he to step down, potential replacements would include Graham Smith, the manager of London, the divisional champions, and England B.

O'Gorman badly injured

EMMA O'Gorman, the apprentice jockey, received serious head injuries in a fall at Southwell yesterday. She was knocked unconscious after being thrown from Honey Mill 25 yards from the finish of the six-furlong Design Contractors Claiming Stakes.

O'Gorman, aged 17, the daughter of the Newmarket-based trainer Bill O'Gorman, was taken by ambulance to be treated in the racetrack medical room before being moved to the Queen's Medical Centre at Nottingham, about 15 miles away.

"Emma has a bad head injury but I can't say any more at present," Dr David Layfield, the senior medical officer at the course, said.

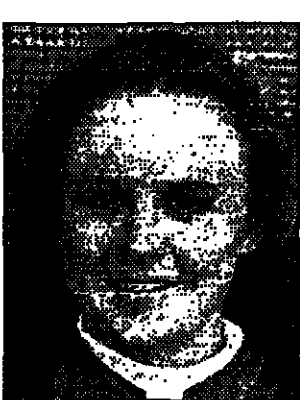
The stewards held an enquiry into the incident and,

after interviewing Neil Kennedy, the jockey of Dee And Em, and Dean McKeown, rider of Figment, and watching a video replay of the race, ruled that the fall was caused

either by Honey Mill clipping the heels of Dee And Em or by the mare crossing her legs. They were unable to apportion blame and took no further action.

Like another woman jockey, Alex Greaves, O'Gorman has enjoyed great success since all-weather racing began in November 1989. Although she has ridden regularly at both Lingfield Park and Southwell, it is Southwell which has provided her greatest successes. She has recorded 13 winners from just 59 rides at the Midlands track, mostly for her father.

Honey Mill, a five-year-old mare who has never won a race, was a rare outside ride for her. The five-year-old is trained by Cheltenham-based Owen O'Neill.



O'Gorman: serious injury

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